

The 12 Reasons for Christmas Why Jesus Came To Teach and Train

Introduction

- Good morning, as the song tells us, “It’s the most wonderful time of the year.”
- The Christmas season is upon us.
- Now I know for some Christmas can be difficult, it can bring back memories of those we’ve lost, or family we no longer see.
- But most of us also have images or memories that come to mind when we think of Christmas.
- It may be a special toy you received as a child (I remember when I was 13 and my brother and I got that amazing video game PONG).
- Or it may be a special meal that your mom or wife always prepares on Christmas day. (Prime Rib has become a tradition at our house.)
- For me I’ll never forget our first Christmas in Thailand.
- Many of the things I’d associated with Christmas were nowhere to be found.
- Christmas is not a holiday in very Buddhist **THAILAND**.
- So, there were no Christmas trees.
- No Carols on the Radio
- No shopping malls, unless you drove to Bangkok.
- And for **us** there was no **extended family**.
- But we were determined to **Celebrate Christmas**.
- As I said Thailand had no Christmas Trees, but they had plenty of **Christmas lights**.
- They didn’t call them **Christmas lights** but to attract business many **shops would display strings of lights year-round**.
- So, we got **some lights**.
- We put some on the **outside of our house**.
- But the thing I remember most was **the Christmas Tree Wall**.
- Instead of an actual **Christmas tree** we took lights and taped them to **one of our walls** in the shape of a **Christmas tree**.
- **And** every Christmas since then I think back to that **wall of lights**.
- It has a special place in my **memory**.
- I can see the **neighborhood kids** in our home looking at our “Christmas tree” and asking **WHY ARE THESE FORIENERS TAPING LIGHTS TO THEIR WALL**.
- But it gave us many opportunities to share why **we celebrate Christmas**.

- And that's the most important thing about the Christmas season.
- As believers, Christmas has a special, deeper, greater meaning.
- It's more than family, it's more than trees and presents.
- It's even more than good food.
- It's the time of year that we focus on the fact that God **sent His Son into our world**.
- The theological term is **THE INCARNATION**
- God became man.
- **Emanuel** – God with US!
- Or as the apostle John put it in “**The Word Became Flesh and made his dwelling among us.**”
- Buy Why?
- Why did Jesus Come?
- Why did God take on human flesh?
- Why do we **have Christmas**?
- Why did, as the apostle Paul put it in **Philippians 2:6-7**,

⁶ ...though [Jesus] was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. (Philippians 2:6-7)

- Why did God the Son make himself nothing and take on **human likeness**?
- Most of us know **the Big Answer**.
- We understand that **WE NEEDED A SAVIOR...**
- That God sent his Son,
- That Jesus willingly made himself nothing that we might **be SAVED through Him**.
- And I'll speak specifically about this **Central Reason** for Jesus' coming in a few weeks on **December 24th**, the Sunday morning of Christmas Eve.
- But there are **other reasons**.
- These reasons are not separate from bringing **SALVATION**.
- But as we'll see these other reasons give fullness to what it means to live out our **SALVATION**.
- For the next **four weeks (during Advent)** we'll be looking at **12 reasons for Christmas**.
- **12 Reasons** that Jesus **made himself nothing** and entered our world as one of us.
- Each week we'll cover **three** specific reasons. (4 X 3) = 12.
- Each week there will be a **theme that covers the three reasons** for that Sunday.
- This week the theme is...

Jesus Came to Teach and Train

- Jesus was an **extraordinary** teacher.
- Crowds of people followed him everywhere.
- They wanted to see what he did, and they wanted to hear what he taught.
- Just consider Jesus' most famous teaching.
- The Sermon on the Mount
- **President Harry Truman Said -**

I do not believe there is a problem in this country or the world today which could not be settled if approached through the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount. (Harry Truman)

- When Jesus taught people were amazed.
- In **John chapter 7** we read that Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching...
- And...

¹⁵ The Jews therefore marveled, saying, "How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?" (John 7:15)

- This marveling at Jesus' teaching was true when he walked the earth, and it continues in our day as people encounter his teaching in the Bible.
- I just finished reading a book called, "**Son of Hamas**", it is by Mosab Hassan Yousef, the son of one of the founders of Hamas.
- When he was 18, he was sent to prison for purchasing guns, which he intended to use to kill Israelis.
- But while there he became **disillusioned** by the leaders of Hamas,
- He'd also been given a New Testament,
- And as he read the teaching of Jesus, he marveled at what Jesus said about love and forgiveness.
- He didn't become a Christian right away, but he became a follower of the teachings of Jesus.
- Which eventually lead him to **give his life fully to Christ.**
- So, yes, Jesus came to save but he didn't just grow to be a certain age and then go to the cross and died for our sins.
- When he reached the **age of 30**, he began his public ministry which lasted for **3 ½ years.**
- **And during that time** Jesus taught some amazing, marvelous things.
- **That have and continue to change people's lives.**
- Jesus taught with spoken words, and he taught by example.

- And that brings us to the first of today's three reasons for His coming.

1. Jesus Came to be Our Example

- We talked about this when we were going through **1 Peter**.
- If you remember Peter wrote...

21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. (1 Peter 2:21)

- Jesus is the **ultimate** example.
- Peter speaks specifically of Christ as our **example in suffering**.
- The Greek word for example ***hypo-grapho***.
- And it's only used once in the New Testament, here in **1 Peter**.
- It refers to the faint outlines of letters which were traced over by pupils learning to write,
- Remember when you were learning to write your **ABCs...**
- At least when I was in school, my teacher gave us books with the letters written with dashes and to learn how to write we would trace over the already provided letters.
- And Peter is saying that our lives should **metaphorically trace over the life of Christ**.
- That we should **follow in His Steps...**
- Have you ever **walked behind someone on the beach**?
- You can see their footprints in the sand.
- If you step in their footprints, you are **walking in their steps**.
- Jesus came to leave us with **footprints to walk in**.
- We would have **no footprints** if Jesus did not **have feet**.
- He was made in **Human likeness** so we would have **human feet to follow**.
- Without Christ taking on human flesh, we would not have his perfect example to follow.
- We wouldn't know how to pray as he did.
- For Jesus not only taught us how to pray, ***Our father who art in heaven***.
- but he lived a life characterized by prayer.
- He spent extended time in his Father's presence.
- He prayed for his disciples who were with him and those like us who would follow him in the future.
- He taught us the most important way to end our prayers... ***"not my will but yours be done."***
- And these are just a few things Jesus taught us about prayer...
- Also, he taught us how to love and forgive.
- The Old Testament gave us the commands to love the Lord our god with all our heart soul mind and strength and to love our neighbors...'
- But in **John 13** Jesus said...

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: (that's not the new part this is the new part) just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. (John 13:34)

- Jesus said look at me, look at how I loved you and love one another in the same way.

- Love one another with a sacrificial giving caring love.
- **Jesus also**, by his example, taught us how to **resist temptation and defeat the enemy**.
- When he was led into the wilderness and tempted by the devil.
- How did he respond to the devil's half-truths and lies,
- he responded with the **word of God**.
- Jesus taught us how to treat our enemies.
- He said **radical things like**, love your enemies.
- And he demonstrated this from the cross when he said of those **who crucified him**.
- **Father Forgive them for they know not what they do**.
- And we **could go on and on** about how Christ taught us through both his words and his action.
- Jesus provides us with **the examples** we need to live the Christian life.
- And there are **two important applications** to the fact that Jesus came to be our example.
- The first is hopefully obvious.
- **We must strive to follow HIS example**.
- Now, it seems we're all looking for examples to follow.
- And for me, from childhood, I chose to follow the example of **Batman**.
- I watched with **rapt attention**, the classic Adam West TV Show, POW BANG
- I would tie a towel around my neck and run around pretending that I was Batman.
- Later I read the comics and watched all the animated TV shows and the movies."
- And even to this day, on my refrigerator, I have a magnet that my kids gave me.
- It says: **Always be yourself, unless you can be Batman, then always be Batman**.
- However, if you think about it, it's not good to **always be Batman**.
- Yes, he does exemplify some good qualities like **Justice**.
- But he's driven not by love and forgiveness but by **vengeance**.
- His answer to most problems is **violence**.
- So, you and I shouldn't really model our lives after **Batman**.
- However, we should model our lives after Jesus.
- In fact, I'm looking for a new **Magnet** to put on my fridge that would say...
- **Don't always be yourself, instead in the power of the Spirit, always be Jesus**.
- Always love, forgive, care, have compassion, justice, mercy grace like Jesus.
- So that is the first and obvious application.
- **We must seek to follow Christ's example**.
- **Or put simply we must follow in his footsteps**.
- **We must be like Jesus**.

- And the **first step** to following any example is knowing everything we possibly can about it.
- I know that **Good Actors** sometimes spend months **studying a character** before shooting starts.
- **Russell Crowe** who has played real life individuals.
- Said this regarding how he **prepares** to play a certain character:

Preparation and research is a privilege and I love to do it, I'm very inquisitive. And I also know, I absolutely know that the more I put into the character the more apparent it is on the screen. (Russel Crowe)

- Now that might seem like a strange example.
- But if we as believers would be willing to do our research.
- If we would consider it a privilege to know more about Jesus.
- If we were inquisitive about the things Jesus said and did.
- Then I know, **I absolutely know** that our lives would be **transformed** in such a way that it would be apparent to anyone watching.
- And that brings us to the second and **less obvious** application is that....
- Not only is Jesus our example, but **we are called to be EXAMPLES of Jesus.**
- To the Church in Corinth the Apostle Paul says –

Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. (1 Corinthians 11:1)

- Jesus is the **ultimate example**.
- But as we follow His example, we are to **call others to follow our example**.
- As we walk in **His footsteps**, others will be **walking in our footsteps**.
- Each of us **will be an example**.
- We will be **an example** wherever we are, at work at home at church.
- We will be an example to our **family, especially our kids**, our grandkids, our friends, our neighbors.
- The question becomes **what kind of example will we be?**
- Will we be examples of what it's like to do our own thing?
- Or will we be examples of what it is like to **do Christ's thing?**
- Jesus came to be our example and he calls us to **be examples to one another**.
- And for the **next Four weeks** we'll be looking at the questions **"Why Jesus Came"**
- But every answer to that question also provides an application for our lives.
- Because **Jesus is our example**.
- Sometimes I think **we lack motivation** in following Jesus' example and being an example to others.
- Our **lack of motivation** comes from the fact that **we view Jesus' life and teachings** as unique to Him.

- Only Jesus could accomplish those things.
- Only Jesus could pray like that.
- Only Jesus could love like that.
- Only Jesus....
- He was the **perfect and Sinless**.
- And I am **imperfect, Sinful**.
- How can I follow his example, how can I be **an example to anyone**?
- Well, in **John 14:12** Jesus said something that is both amazing and speaks to this question.

12 “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. (John 14:12)

- Jesus says if **we** believe (trust) in Him, **we can follow His example**.
- We can, and this would be blasphemy if Jesus didn't say it, **do even greater things than these**.
- How, **because JESUS is going to the Father**.
- Jesus then goes on in **John 14** to tell his disciple that his going to the father means **two things** for them and us.
- **First**, that he will be there to answer our prayers and to intercede on our behalf.
- And **second**, he will ask the Father to send another **Helper, the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit** who will be in you.
- So, with Jesus' interceding for us, we through the power of the **Holy Spirit** can both follow his example and be an example to those around us.
- In my life I've **had and continue to have** many examples.
- Some of **my examples** are in this room today.
- I won't mention any names, but I'll say I truly appreciate those who follow the example of Christ in such a way that I can see areas of my own life that do not measure up, areas that need to change.
- I am following their example as they follow Christ.
- **We have a wealth of such examples**.
- Both those **who live among us** and those who have gone before us.
- Church History is full of many such examples.
- Men and women who followed so hard after Christ that we can now follow their example.
- My favorite past example has always been **Hudson Taylor**.
- Not only because he was a **great missionary**.
- Not only because he opened inland China to the Gospel.
- But because he led such a faithful life.

- Many in China still revere his name.
- Years ago, the communist government in China commissioned an author to write a biography of Hudson Taylor with the purpose of distorting the facts and presenting him in a bad light.
- Hudson Taylor a product of **Western Colonialism and Capitalism**.
- The Communist wanted to discredit the name of this revered missionary of the gospel.
- As the author was doing his research, he was increasingly impressed by Taylor's saintly character and godly life,
- and he found it extremely difficult to carry out his assigned task with a clear conscience.
- Eventually, at the risk of losing his life, he laid aside his pen, renounced his atheism, and received Jesus as his personal Savior.
- Jesus came to be our example.
- **Hudson Taylor**, followed Jesus' example and like many others, has left an incredible example for us to follow.
- **And we too must be an example of what it means to follow Christ.**
- **So, first Jesus came to be Our Example.**
- And second...

2. Jesus Came to Preach the Gospel

- In **Luke 4:43** Jesus said...

⁴³ ... "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose." (Luke 4:43)

- Jesus had a mission to complete.
- He always had the cross before Him.
- But along the way **during His 3 ½ years of ministry** he also had a **message to deliver**.
- That **message** is what we call the **Gospel** or literally the **GOOD NEWS!**
- Jesus came to **preach the good news of the kingdom of God**.
- What was the good news!
- The good news was that the promised **MESSIAH** (Christ) had arrived.
- Therefore, **Salvation is near**.
- The Messiah has come to establish God's Kingdom.
- That was what the Jewish people were waiting for.
- But they had been mistaken about the nature of the KINGDOM.
- They thought it would be an earthly physical Kingdom.
- They thought that **the Messiah** would come to toss out the Romans and Rebuild ISRAEL.
- But the **Good News** was and is that God's Kingdom is in the Hearts of Men and Women.
- And that the Messiah has come to Rule and Reign in your lives.

- Jesus said,

³² I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. (Luke 5:32)

- Repentance and Forgiveness are available to those who **Make Me their KING.**
- That is the Message that Jesus **PREACHED.**
- That is why He was sent.
- And remember, Jesus is our example and therefore...
- **We to are called to PREACH the gospel.**
- This is in fact part of the Mission he gave to his disciples.
- In **Mark 16** Jesus said...

¹⁵ And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim (PREACH) the gospel to the whole creation. (Mark 16:15)

- I think we’ve gotten confused about the word PREACH.
- It is a scary word to most.
- We think it is ONLY what Pastors do on Sunday Mornings
- Or what evangelists to in big stadiums.
- Or even what wild **eyed crazy people do on street corners.**
- I’m not saying that God does not gift certain people to Preach to large crowds or even on street corners.
- But what I am saying is that Jesus calls each and every one of us to PREACH the gospel.
- To be witnesses
- To proclaim the message of reconciliation.
- The word **preach** simply means “to announce, to proclaim, to herald”
- It’s not a technical term that can only be learned in SEMINARY.
- Paul understood this, he saw himself as Christ's herald.
- **In 2 Timothy 1:11 he writes**

¹¹ ...I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, (2 Timothy 1:11)

- When he describes himself as an **appointed herald or preacher** of the gospel,
- The noun he uses means a person who makes public announcements on another's behalf.
- **J. I. PACKER** said this about Paul and his preaching.

Paul, in his own estimation, was not a philosopher, not a moralist, not one of the world's wise men, but simply Christ's herald. His royal master had given him a message to proclaim; his whole business was to deliver that message... (J. I. Packer)

- And that should be our whole business as well.
- We are called to preach the gospel.
- But that just means we are called to announce **who Jesus is and what he has done.**

- **The Christmas Story**, found in Luke's gospel, provides a **great illustration** of what it means to preach the gospel.
- Beginning in **Chapter 2 verse 8** we read these familiar words...

⁸ And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

***¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"***

¹⁵ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. (Luke 2:8-20)

- **First**, we have the **Angels** preaching to the shepherds.
- They announce **good news of great joy**.
- The Good News the Gospel is that **the Savior has come!**
- **Fine**, you say, that's what angels do.
- In fact, the word Angel in the GREEK means MESSENGER.
- But they are not the only messengers at this first Christmas.
- In **verse 17** we read... ***¹⁷ And when they*** (the shepherds) ***saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. (Luke 2:17-18)***
- The simple shepherds became the first people (in the New Testament) to preach the gospel.
- To announce what they had been told about this child.
- **The application** should be clear!
- What have you been **told (what does God's word teach) about this Child?**
- What have you **experienced in your relationship with this child who became your savior?**
- **That is what you and I are called to announce to our world.**
- To our friends and family and neighbors.
- And to whoever God calls us to make the announcement to.
- Jesus Came to Preach the Gospel.
- Jesus is our example.
- We to must preach the gospel.

- But Jesus did not **just preach the gospel**.
- He did not just say the words.
- For those willing to **respond JESUS** took it to the next level

3. Jesus Came to Make Disciples

- In **Matthew Chapter 4** we read of Jesus **calling his first disciple**...
- Verse 19...

¹⁹ And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." (Matthew 4:19)

- As we read through the **Gospels** it's clear that Jesus **had a plan**.
- He knew that **his ultimate purpose** would lead to His Death.
- He knew that salvation could not come unless He was sacrificed.
- So, throughout his **3 ½ years of ministry** Jesus taught and preached to **the masses**.
- But He poured his life **into 12 men. His disciples**.
- One of His disciples would betray him.
- But the others, along with **the apostle Paul**, would be charged with the task of establishing His Kingdom, His Church on Earth.
- Jesus called each of His disciples to Follow Him...
- To go where he went.
- To live as he lived.
- To hear what he taught.
- And ultimately to do what he did.
- To become fishers of men.
- To cast their nets into the sea of humanity calling men and women to come to Christ.
- These disciples were to carry on what Jesus had begun.
- To catch men for the Kingdom of God.
- Jesus was saying COME BE MY DISCIPLE AND I WILL MAKE YOU A DISCIPLE MAKER.
- Again, we are called to follow Jesus' example.
- He made disciples and we are called not only be disciples but ...
- **We are called to MAKE DISCIPLES**.
- In **Matthew 28** we read Jesus final words to his disciples...

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

- This is our task, the mission that we, the Church, has been given.
- To make disciples of all nations...
- It sounds like a **big deal**, doesn't it?
- That's probably why it's called **the great commission**.

- I mean, it's a commissioning of the followers of Christ to not only preach the gospel to all nations but to make disciples. **True Followers of Jesus Christ.**
- To teach and train them in obeying God's word.
- **That's great.**
- But again, I think we have a problem.
- We've **relegated** the fulfillment of the Great commission to the professionals.
- The Pastors the Missionaries.
- When in fact we are **all called to Make Disciples.**

Hudson Taylor said,

The Great Commission is not an option to consider but a command to obey.

- Again, Jesus is our example.
- He was willing to submit to the will of the Father.
- He was willing to make himself nothing taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness that he might relate to us.
- He was, in short, willing to live among us that we might learn from His life and teachings.
- He has provided us with the **method for discipleship.**
- We must be willing to **submit to the will of the Father.**
- We must be willing to **make ourselves nothing,**
- We must be willing to go where he calls, and do what you commands.
- Doing our part in preaching the gospel and make disciples of all nations all peoples.
- AMEN!
- And so, as we (after communion and the fabulous Christmas luncheon) leave this place and enter the world.
- **Remember that Jesus came to Teach and To Train.**
- Remember he gave us a perfect example to follow.
- An example of preaching the Gospel and making disciples.
- And never forget he is praying for us,
- And he's given us the gift of the Holy Spirit that dwells in our lives.
- Therefore, we must ask ourselves, in the power of the Spirit, who are we teaching who are we training.
- Are we following Jesus' example?
- Are we preaching the gospel?
- Are we making disciples?
- And if not, why not?
- **Would you pray with me as Sean, the worship team and the ushers come forward to lead us in communion.**