

“Hidden Christmas” – An Advent Bible Study
on the Surprising Truth Behind the Birth of Christ,
Chapters 7 and 8

Chapter Seven
“A Sword in the Soul”

You don’t have to be Jesus Christ to get people furious at being exposed for what they are. Just living an honest, moral life will expose gossip in the office, corruption in government, racism in the neighborhood. The manger at Christmas means that, if you live like Jesus, there won’t be room for you in a lot of inns. (119)

Have you ever experienced this type of rejection because of living like Jesus?

What might be some of the “inns” that don’t have rooms for Christ followers?

In our secular society today, non-Christians do not fear divine reprisal, but increasingly our culture also sees Christians as a threat to the social order. Traditional Christian beliefs are once again seen as dangerously intolerant, and some kinds of restrictions and exclusions may be in our future as well. So, the Gospel message brings hostility because it is seen – now as then – as intolerant. (120-121)

What traditional Christian beliefs today are seen as intolerant? How are Christians to respond to those who feel the Gospel message is intolerant?

But Simeon is saying that there is an offensiveness to Jesus himself, and in every time and place it will find expression, and anyone who identifies with him will be seen as offensive too. (121-122)

If the very picture we see of Jesus in the Gospels is love, mercy, grace and forgiveness – just what is it that makes him so “offensive”?

J.C Ryle writes: There are thousands of men and women who go to church and chapels every Sunday and call themselves Christians. Their names are in the baptismal register. They are reckoned Christians while they live. They are married with a Christian marriage service. They are buried as Christians when they die. But you never see any “fight” about their religion! Of spiritual strife, and exertion, and conflict, and self-denial, and watching, and warring they know literally nothing at all. Such Christianity...is not the Christianity of the Bible. It is not the religion which the Lord Jesus founded, and His Apostles preached. True Christianity is “a fight.” (124-125)

J.C Ryle says True Christianity is a fight – which best represents you in this season of your life”? Why?

- ☐ I’ll watch the fight
- ☐ Push and shove
- ☐ Scuffle
- ☐ Trading punches
- ☐ Fight

What other word might you use to describe “True Christianity?”

Chapter Eight “The Doctrine of Christmas”

In every other religion the founder points to eternal life, but because Jesus is God come in the flesh, he is eternal life. To unite with him by faith, to know him in love, is to have this life. Period, full stop. There is nothing else for you to achieve or attain. (130)

What does “unite with him by faith” entail? According to your definition would you say you personally are united with Christ?

Can we describe our prayer lives as participating in rich communion with God? The incarnation, Christmas, means that God is not content to be a concept or just someone you know from a distance. Do what it takes to get close to him. Christmas is a challenge as well as a promise about fellowship with God. (136)

What in your ordinary day to day life are you doing to get close to Jesus? Be specific.

How can the group of people that you are meeting with weekly help you? How can you help them?

The Christian life begins not with high deeds and achievements but with the most simple and ordinary act of humble asking. Then the life and joy grow in us over the years through commonplace, almost boring practices. Daily obedience, reading and prayer, worship attendance, serving our brothers and sisters in Christ as well as our neighbors, depending on Jesus during times of suffering. And bit by bit our faith will grow, and the foundations of our lives will come closer to that deep river of joy.

Don’t be put off by the ordinariness of the means of joy, for in that ordinariness is hidden the extraordinary riches of the Gospel. Don’t make the mistake that the world has always made. Instead remember:

*How silently, how silently
The wondrous gift is given!
So, God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heaven
No ear may hear His coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him still,
The dear Christ enters in. 140-141)*

At this point in your life – regardless of where you are in your spiritual journey – after reading this book what is the one thing you need to stop doing, start doing, stop believing or start believing?

All texts in *italics* are taken directly from the book Hidden Christmas written by Timothy Keller. Copyright 2016

Class #1 - Saturday Nov 27, 2021 (1/2)
Class #3 - Saturday Dec 11, 2021 (5/6)

Class#2 - Saturday Dec 4, 2021 (3/4)
Class #4 - Saturday Dec 18, 2021 (7/8)