

Topic	Christmas
Reference	John 18:37
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What would make a great Christmas?

Perhaps it could be spending time with people that really matters to you. That is called relational. May be getting a gift for someone you love. May be you came to church and the choir was great, the worship was fantastic. If we break it down Christmas in a sense is a birthday celebration.

If we are honest with ourselves our lives reflects a bit on our self-centeredness, because really today is not about us, it is about Jesus. It is really about how today you and I honor God, it is really quite self-centered to say that great Christmas is something that makes me happy, makes me feel loved.

I think there is a specific answer to each one of you, in your own, where you are coming from and where you are in life. I really want that to be the message.

John 18:37 Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice."

This verse is spoken not at his birth but just before he dies. So before he dies he reminds everyone why he was born and this is the time where he is being caught for treason and Pilate the governor is interrogating him and the purpose of Christmas is sandwiched between two verses, one about the king and then one about the truth.

What would Jesus want for Christmas?

You cannot talk about Christmas without looking at the cross. To understand why he was born into this world there are two things here.

1. Him being a king.
2. Him being truth.

When Jesus spoke to Pilate, Pilate replied, **what is truth?**

That is really like nowadays what we live in.

1. **Truth is relative.** When you stick to your truth and I stick to my truth. Truth in the physical world is absolute. The law of physics applies to all of us. What is true on the

physical world is true on the emotional world and what is true in emotional world is true on the spiritual world. Here is a strange thing when it comes to the spiritual world everybody must be relative.

Imagine you have an argument with somebody or something bad happened to you or you had something unpleasant, your immediate reaction is to believe that you are right and the other party is wrong. The other party will say that they are right and you are wrong. Here truth has become relative, but it is not, truth is absolute. There is an objective truth in that thing.

2. **Truth is obscured**, but it is not because Jesus tells Pilate, *everyone who is of truth listens to my voice*. Truth is not something you analyze and tear apart and you have your view, I have my view. Truth is revealed by God, it is a revelation, especially on spiritual matters. If God does not reveal himself to you, you and I will have different views about God. You can think God is this, God is that, I believe God is whatever you want to be but God reveals himself and that is what really Christmas is, God reveals himself in the form of a baby.

When I was not a Christian, I always think that these Christians are always pushing their religion on us. I mean why can't we just do good and whoever is up there when I die and if I do wake up and find out really there is an afterlife, the one who is up will look at my good deeds and he will reward me with whatever is in store.

We treat God like he is Santa Claus. So if I do good, God whoever you are you are going to reward me and it goes to this current world. So we think if we do charity, we do this and that God is going to give me good health. If I do a lot of good deeds God will give me what I desire most. When bad things happen to us, we ask ourselves why do bad things happen to me, is God punishing me.

Truth is objective and secondly truth is revealed.

Truth is a matter of choice.

When Pilate said, I find no guilt in him. It means that Pilate has come to a truth; the truth is Jesus is innocent, but because of social pressure he decides to let Jesus be crucified.

Whether we have an argument with somebody or how I view God or what happen to me in my life, I can choose to believe what I want to believe and very often we believes lies but when we look at Pilate we understand one thing, he is not a bad guy. He is not a murderer or killer but yet even though he knows the truth he crumbles, his social conditioning influences him.

We need an eye to deep look at ourselves, is it really what is the absolute truth or are you believing that because it just makes you feel better. If it is it reveals a particular sin and that is

why Jesus came into this world. It is this thing called I want to be king of my life. In fact that is the bottom line of sin and Christmas in many ways is the answer because Christmas is the birth of the king of all kings. Why is God telling us that? Why did he sent a king in the form of flesh?

He is telling us because you and I want to be kings of our lives and we relegate God to Christmas, once a year we show up in church. When I live Christmas today and I go off to my work I am king of my lives, I blot out God what I do at work, how I raise my kids, how I am dealing with my finances, what I do privately with my computer, what web sites I serve, nothing to do with you God, I am king and that is sin.

Christmas reminds us that God loved us so much that is the king that saved us and that is why the birth of a savior has to end with a cross and that is why Pilate is told this before Jesus is crucified and on that cross he took our sins away. Now we all have heard this so often that it does not enter here. So I want to really tell you why it does not enter, it does not enter because we are scared. Because the idea of God running my life is frightening, because sinful nature wants to run our lives our own way and we bury the way, we come to church, we do a lot of stuff and we tell everyone we are good Christians, actually we are not because we have not surrendered our entire lives to God and it is really coming to what Jesus really wants. Now how do you get that? So many people know like Pilate, they know it is true but they are not going to cross their lines because they are scared because being a Christian is difficult, and God knows that and this is the heart of Christmas. You see it is not just enough, you know why here, you need to do this, and you need to marvel at Jesus. A lot of scriptures are talking about adoration and awe and just having that wow! He is God.

What Pilate does is that he says, what is truth and what he has to do.

After he said it he went back outside meaning, Like Francis Bacon wrote in a book, he didn't have time to pause, to ponder. One of the best preachers in the world is Francis Chan and in one Christmas sermon, he was quite right about this, he said that Christmas sermons became very preoccupied of let's get the choir right, let's get the worship right, the sermon has got to be very slick, the whole thing may become a performance. So one Christmas service he prayed and prayed and he said that God was telling him, you know what Francis I don't need you because you are a superstar preacher. So he said, I am not going to preach on this Christmas day and he gave the preaching duties to a teenager.

A teenager preached for 15 minutes and then she sang and this was the best Christmas sermon I heard, because that girl was blind and what Francis Chan was trying to tell everyone was, you come to church and you are distracted and when you hear her speak and she says, I am blind since birth I have never seen a manger, I don't know what sheep look like, I don't know what a shepherd looks like, I don't know how a wise man looks like, I have never seen stars but I read and I believe. That is why the scripture says, the blind are seeing and we with eyes are blind. It

is because we don't take time to have awe and the blind girl pauses and she takes it in and her soul sings out, O Holy Night.

Here is the last part of Christmas that we very often don't ponder upon and that is this, the king of kings, lord of lords will return and when he returns everyone will be amazed but for some it will be too late.

Christmas is a time to be awed by the majesty of God who came as a baby, what have we done we have replaced it with Santa Claus. Christmas is about majesty and meekness as we look at angels coming descending upon and stars, star of David guiding and we have replaced this with Christmas trees, glittering lights. Christmas is about real people, Joseph, Mary, shepherds; we have replaced them with the North Pole, snow man and elves. Christmas ends at the cross and we have replaced that with an Easter bunny.

What the world is doing, Christmas for me is to be odd instead it has been trivialized and mocked and made to be fantasy. This Christmas be odd, spent a few moments it would do so much to break that fear.

In the end what was important is to note every day is Christmas, why, because Christmas is not found in the Bible. The moment we understand why he was born, the moment we learn to be awe of God, learn to adore him it becomes Christmas every day.

King Bhumibol is probably one of the most loved kings in the world, why, because in his majesty as a king there is a lot of meekness. He was a king that went down to the common man and he spent time with them. He went to spent time with the poor, the old, the elderly and he was a king that was deeply loved by the average Thai person and so when he died people asked everyone to do just do what the king use to do and so people came out in gross, collected rubbish, planted trees, did charity, all the thing the king did which many other kings do not do.

Why did the Thai turned out in gross? Because they saw the love of the father, they saw the love of the king and the love of the king so changed them they loved the king back.

What did Jesus want from us this Christmas? To love him back the way he loved us, that he loved us so much he came into the world as a baby and you really pause about that, it is really like wow! Died for me and he will return in majesty.

Jesus says, I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life and this morning God is challenging all of us for the light of life.

CHALLENGE

If Christmas was a just a temporarily relief and it made no difference to your life at all. It is a lie. If you are really feel that way I challenge you to be not like Pilate and walk away and say, what is truth?

Secondly, you heard his voice and God speaks in many ways and he says again, everyone who is of truth listens to my voice and he speaks through the scripture, he speaks through a friend who brought you, he speaks in an inner prompting. This Christmas if you sit there and you are not a religious man and you come to church occasionally. There are areas in your life which you have not surrendered to God; this is what Jesus wants from you this Christmas to give your life to him.

Life has darkness and we don't want to walk out there tomorrow and when darkness hits you and darkness could be in many ways, it could be health problem, a breakdown of your family, something that takes your happiness away and that is no light. That is why Jesus says, he is the light.

Life is like you get on a train and you go on life and life goes on quite well but some time that life, that train goes into a tunnel and sometime that tunnel is dark and it is dark for a very long time. And may be some of you are in that tunnel, may be it is a health issue, may be God is telling you, you are in that tunnel and you feel like jumping off that train because life is just so like why God.

Corrie Ten Boom quoted,

When a train goes through a tunnel and it gets dark, you don't throw away the ticket and jump off. You sit still and trust the engineer.

In Jesus own words, the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.