

Well, Good morning everybody, and Merry Christmas, and happy Holy Day.

At this time of year, every year, as a preacher, I have a very real dilemma: What part of the Christmas story, am I going to focus on, for the Christmas message?

The first 4 books of the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), are what's known as "The Gospels". These 4 books, all tell the story of Jesus' **life**, death and resurrection...

And so it's from the Gospels that we hear the Christmas story...

Something that's been my practice, is when I'm teaching a series **from** one of the Gospels, I like to take the Christmas story **from** that Gospel.... And each of the Gospels focus on a different part of Christmas...

For example:

- In book of Matthew, we hear about the wise men, but he doesn't tell us about the shepherds.
- Luke, on the other hand, has quite a **detailed** account of Jesus' birth, and Luke tell us about the angels and the shepherds... but he doesn't tell us about the wise men.
- The book of John, is a very **spiritual** gospel, and John basically tells us that the one who created the world – stepped into the world,, But was rejected by men...

And **this** year, we've been studying the Gospel of Mark, so what does the Gospel of Mark teach us about Christmas???

Nothing! Nothing at all!!!

If you remember the introduction to Mark, there is no Christmas story...

And so, today we're **not** going to be focusing on "**how** Jesus came", but "**why** Jesus came"...

The overall Gospel of Mark, focuses on "Who Jesus is" – He is Jesus Christ, the Son of God... And its second focus is "**Why** Jesus came."

And a key verse in the Gospel of Mark, would have to be

Mark 10:45

45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

... the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

When a baby is born, most families have all sorts of hopes and dreams for their child...

- Sometimes there's expectations;
- Sometimes there's hopes and dreams;
- Sometimes it's just "wonder"...

Let's use Sammy as an example: When Sammy grows up, I wonder what he's going to be:

- *Will he be a refrigeration mechanic, like his dad?; or*
- *a school principal, like his Pop?; or*
- *will he be a farmer, or a preacher, like his Grandpa?; or*
- *will he be a pianist, like his mum?*

I think I remember (at the hospital) either saying or hearing the words, "Look at those long fingers – just right for playing the piano..."

We all have hopes and dreams for a new-born, don't we...

I wonder what Mary and Joseph hoped for baby Jesus...

- Did they hope that he'd carry on the family business, and be a carpenter like Joseph?
- Or did the words of the Angel Gabriel make them wonder about how Jesus was going to become King for Israel...

What were their hopes – what were their dreams, for little Baby Jesus???

You know, the conclusion of Jesus' physical life, is something that **none** of us would **ever** hope or dream for our children...
– To be humiliated; tortured; and executed as a criminal...
None of us would choose that for our children...

But that was our Heavenly Father's plan for **His** son. That was the whole **purpose** of Jesus' coming...

45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

In a way, “**How** Jesus was born”, is nowhere near as important, as “**Why** Jesus was born”.

the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Do you ever wonder if God really loves you??? Well, the knowledge of why Jesus was born, should clear that right up.

The Apostle Paul fleshes this out for us in Philippians 2. He says this about Jesus:

though he was in the form of God, [He] 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. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

What does it mean, for “Jesus to be a servant of all”?

You know, sometimes, when we think about “the servant-hood of Jesus”, we might think of instances:

- like when He washed the Disciples’ feet; or
- when He fed the 5000; or

- When He had compassion on the crowds when they turned up, when He'd just gone to have a bit of 'alone time' ...

But you know, these examples of Jesus' servanthood, were but a minor part of Jesus taking the roll of a servant...

Around this time of year, (in the Christmas season), it's quite common to see scenes on the nightly news, of a politician; or a royal; or a celebrity, dishing out a Christmas meal at a soup-kitchen, or a homeless shelter...

*And whenever I see those sorts of images, I'm usually quite cynical, because I see it for what it **usually** is – nothing but a carefully stage-managed photo-op, for the celebrity to step down for a moment, before being whisked away again, into the opulence of their normal life...*

When Jesus came to Earth, it wasn't some kind of brief stage-managed photo-op...

This was an enormous thing:

- for Jesus to leave His throne in heaven, to be born as a human child.
- I don't know if you've ever considered this, but a human child, would **have** to be the most helpless of young
- Jesus is the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

- The throne-room of Heaven, is the place, from which He would send His angels to do His bidding;
- Purity and holiness was His...
- Strength; Power; Might; and honour...

And He gave all that up, to become a human child:

- He gave up purity and holiness, to be in the squalor of His own excrement – you do know Jesus used to poo in His nappies, hey...
- He gave up Strength; Power ; Might; and honour, to become this tiny, helpless, dependent child;
- He gave up His rule and reign, to obey His mum and dad, when they gave Him mundane chores to do...

That's how Jesus humbled Himself... And even when He grew into an adult, His humility continued...

he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

... the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Do you know what a King's ransom is??? A King's ransom, is when a King is captured, and is held for ransom... It is what a nation would pay, to get their King back... They would bankrupt their country, to get their King back...

But Jesus is like a **reverse-king's** ransom...

Instead of the plebs (the nobodies), being taxed enormously, to pay the ransom of their king, our King – the King of Heaven – the greatest King of all, gave **His** life as a ransom, to save **us** (the plebs). The highest of the High, gave His life, to save the least of the least – to save nobodies, like you and me...

Christmas time – the celebration of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, is a time of immense joy, but it brings tears to my eyes.., when I realise why Jesus was born...

This is why Christmas is so special. And this is why the Christmas carols are filled with so much worship...

How should one respond to this??? In Philippians, Paul proclaims:

⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus isn't the Baby anymore...

- The manger is empty; and
- so is the cross; and
- so is the tomb

, because Jesus is raised from the dead. And now, the Name of Jesus is above every other name...

Jesus Christ, is **Lord**... And the Lord is not our servant any longer. He is King. **We** are the subjects, and we bow our knee before Him.

Merry Christmas, and happy Holy-Day.

Let's worship Jesus, our Lord....