

December 16, 2007 – 3rd Sunday of Advent
The Wonder Of Christmas Brings Transformation
Christ Brings Love To A World Of Hate
John 1:14 NLT

So the Word became human and lived here on earth among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father.

One little boy came home from Sunday School and his dad asked him what he learned. The boy started to explain what the teacher had told him. “We learned that a fortune teller predicted to a girl that she was going to get married and have a baby. They ended up having to go to a family reunion in their really small home town there wasn’t room in the Motel 6 so they had to stay in a little Motel that was a bit mangy. While they were there the baby had to be born but the small town had no hospital so they went to the Veterinarian doctor and so the baby was born in the same building with cows and stuff in the very next room.”

The dad asked, “Is that really how the teacher said Jesus was born?”

“No, not exactly, but if I told you what she said happened... you’d never believe it!”

It is pretty incredible isn’t it? Yet, our text tells us that God became human and live here on earth among us in the person of Jesus. Why would God do such a thing?

Originally, God created a perfect world, a paradise for man to live in. But Adam and Eve were tempted and disobey God. This ruin everything. Sin entered the world and the effects of sin. One of the effects was hatred. Sin is hatred toward God and sin is selfishness leading to hatred for others. In Genesis 4 we read how Cain hated his brother, Abel and it lead to murder. He was so angry at his brother that he killed him. As we read the Bible, or any book of recorded history, we see how hatred continued on earth.

There is so much hate in our world today. One culture and country has hatred for a different culture and country. It’s been the cause of many wars. Sometimes there are civil wars when people in the same country have hatred for each other. In many parts of the world Christians are being killed simply because they are Christians. In the news this week a young man came to a Youth With A Mission training center and shot four teens, killing two of them. The newspaper said he hated Christians. We had another young man whose anger and hate lead him to go to a mall where he killed several people, before taking his own life. How about in our own community. On trial right now is a black father for shooting a white young man who came to his house with friends after racial slurs were heard and the black man’s son was threaten. The son had to come to court in a bullet proof vest because of further threats; as prejudice continues to be a major and ugly scourge in our country even after all the effort and sacrifice that has been made by so many people over the years.

A Kindergarten teacher asked her class, "What is the shape of the earth?" One little girl spoke up: "My Daddy says --- terrible!"

From Genesis to our present day hatred has been in our world. Our world is in terrible shape. And it is the result of sin. God loves us and wants us to love one another, but sin separates us from God and it impairs our relationship with others.

God is love (1 John 4:16). Not only was Jesus a kind and loving Person who did loving things, He is love. This means that God's very nature and personality resonate love. Everything God has done and will ever do overflows with love. As we relate to God, we can always know that we are being treated with perfect, unconditional love. Our circumstances may be difficult, but behind it all and through it all, God will accomplish His best in our lives because He loves us.

Jesus is love and the Bible commands us to be like Him. It is one thing to know and believe that God is love and that God loves us; it is quite another to actually appropriate God's love into our personal lives so that we are "abiding in love."

Jesus came to bring love to a world of hate. He came to transform our lives from being motivated by selfishness to be motivated by love. He came to give His life for our sin so that we could be like Him. Our text says, "He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness." That means we receive His love, His grace, as an unmerited, unearned gift.

It was Christmas and the judge was in a merry mood as he asked the prisoner, "What are you charged with?"

"Doing my Christmas shopping early," replied the defendant.

"That's no offense," said the judge. "How early were you doing this shopping?"

"Before the store opened," countered the prisoner.

You don't steal the gift God wants to give you, He offers it freely. (John 1:12 NLT) "...to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God." And as His children He wants us to love others as He did. [Someone sent me the following "letter" from Jesus]:

Dear Children ,

It has come to my attention that many of you are upset that folks are taking My name out of the season. Maybe you've forgotten that I wasn't actually born during this time of the year and that it was some of your predecessors who decided to celebrate My birthday on what was actually a time of a pagan festival. Although I do appreciate being remembered anytime.

How I personally feel about this celebration can probably be most easily understood by those of you who have been blessed with children of your own. I don't care what you call

the day. If you want to celebrate My birth, just GET ALONG AND LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

Now, having said that, let Me go on. If it bothers you that the town in which you live doesn't allow a scene depicting My birth, then just get rid of a couple of Santas and snowmen and put in a small Nativity scene on your own front lawn. If all My followers do that, there wouldn't be any need for such a scene on the town square because there would be many of them all around town.

Stop worrying about the fact that people are calling the tree a holiday tree instead of a Christmas tree. It was I who made all trees. You can remember Me anytime you see any tree. Decorate a grape vine if you wish. I actually spoke of that one in a teaching, explaining who I am in relation to you and what each of our tasks are. If you have forgotten that one, look up John 15: 1 - 8.

If you want to give Me a present in remembrance of My birth, here is my wish list. Choose something from it.

1. Instead of writing protest letters objecting to the way My birthday is being celebrated, write letters of love and hope to soldiers away from home. They are terribly afraid and lonely this time of year. I know, they tell Me all the time.
2. Visit someone in a nursing home. You don't have to know them personally. They just need to know that someone cares about them.
3. Instead of writing George complaining about the wording on the cards his staff sent out this year, why don't you write and tell him that you'll be praying for him and his family this year. Then follow up. It will be nice hearing from you again.
4. Instead of giving your children a lot of gifts you can't afford and they don't need, spend time with them. Tell them the story of My birth, and why I came to live with you down here. Hold them in your arms and remind them that I love them.
5. Pick someone that has hurt you in the past and forgive him or her.
6. Did you know that someone in your town will attempt to take their own life this season because they feel so alone and hopeless? Since you don't know who that person is, try giving everyone you meet a warm smile. It could make the difference.
7. Instead of nit picking about what the retailer in your town calls the holiday, be patient with the people who work there. Give them a warm smile and a kind word. Even if they aren't allowed to wish you a "Merry Christmas", that doesn't keep you from wishing them one. Then stop shopping there on Sunday. If the store didn't make so much money on that day they'd close and let their employees spend the day at home with their families

8. If you really want to make a difference, support a missionary-- especially one who takes My love and Good News to those who have never heard My name.

9. Here's a good one. There are individuals and whole families in your town who not only will have no "Christmas" tree, but neither will they have any presents to give or receive. If you don't know them, buy some food and a few gifts and give them to the Salvation Army or some other charity that believes in Me and they will make the delivery for you.

10. Finally, if you want to make a statement about your belief in and loyalty to Me, then behave like a Christian. Don't do things in secret that you wouldn't do in My presence. Let people know by your actions that you are one of mine.

Don't forget: I am God and can take care of Myself. Just love Me and do what I have told you to do. I'll take care of all the rest. Check out the list above and get to work. Time is short. I'll help you, but the ball is now in your court. And do have a most blessed Christmas with all those whom you love and remember :

I LOVE YOU,

JESUS

[You may not agree with everything in this "letter" but I think you get the point...bring love to the world...that's what Jesus did, and He wants you to do the same.]

Let me go back to a question I asked in the beginning of this message: God became human and live here on earth among us in the person of Jesus. Why would God do such a thing? Because He wants us to know Him and experience His love for us; because He wants to make us like Him, He wants us to reflect His love to the world, to make a difference in this world; and He came to this world because He wants us to be with Him forever in the next world. Everything I have been saying the last 20 minutes to answer the question of why God became human in Jesus and live among us on earth, Jesus summed up in one sentence.

John 3:16 NCV

"God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son so that whoever believes in him may not be lost, but have eternal life."

And in the next verse it says:

John 3:17 NLT

God did not send his Son into the world to condemn it, but to save it."

He brought love to a world of hate. He came to transform lives. And one day He will come again and there will be a new heaven and a new earth and hatred will be no more. He came to earth so that we could go to heaven.

[ILLUSTRATION]

[Testimony: Joe & Suzy Herrmann]