

Matthew 1:21

21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

I'm dreaming of a right Christmas. That's "RIGHT" not "white".

I'm dreaming of a RIGHT Christmas!

What does Christmas mean to you? To some people it means hard work. The stores are crowded with shoppers, the post office is overflowing with mail, and the trains and buses and planes are carrying record crowds. Until he retired, my father-in-law was an assistant manager of a large chain grocery store in Ottawa, Canada. The Christmas season was always the most exhausting time of the year for him.

To some people Christmas means a visit home. This is a great time to be with family. To others Christmas means a sad memory. They look back and think of the loved one who has left them since last Christmas.

To some Christmas means parties. They talk more about the whiskey they're going to put in their eggnog than they do about the savior for whom Christmas is named. To millions and millions of people, Christmas really means nothing. They do not know Jesus. December 25th is just another day off work.

But Christmas means everything to the real Christian. It means that God loves them with all His heart. It means that God has regarded their lost condition and has done something about it. It means that God has given them the greatest gift that even God could give.

It means that their Savior is born - born to set an example with His life - born to die for their sins - born to be raised for their justification - born to ascend on high and make intercession for them - born to give them hope of His coming again to gather all believers unto Himself. Christmas means that they have a Companion for life - a Friend in the hour of death - a Loving Brother for all eternity. Yes, Christmas means everything to a Christian.

I'm dreaming of a RIGHT Christmas! If we are to have a RIGHT Christmas, certain things must be placed in that Christmas. Let's follow the Gospel story and see what a RIGHT Christmas includes.

A right Christmas includes MAKING ROOM FOR JESUS.

When Mary and Joseph came to the inn, the inn-keeper said, "We have no room for you." Oh, he was a man who missed Christmas and all of its meaning! He had many guests at his inn, but they were soon gone and forgotten. If he had allowed Jesus to be born there, this would have changed his inn and his whole life.

The captain of a whaling ship went to church one Sunday. The preacher talked to him later and learned that the sermon had made absolutely no impression upon him. "To tell the truth, sir," replied the captain, "all the time that you were speaking, I was thinking about where I would be most likely to find my next whale." Is this true of you? Is your heart so full of other things that there is no room in it for Jesus?

As you drive down the highway, you see "No Vacancy" signs in front of many motels along the way. Have you hung out the same sign as far as Jesus is concerned? Have you said to him, "There is no room here for you. My heart is all filled up. Go away."? No room for Jesus!

That is like a tree saying it has no room for the sap - like an ocean saying it has no room for the tide - like the heavens saying they have no room for the stars - like a garden saying it has no room for the flowers. Oh, make room for Jesus in your life. You are simply not really living if you haven't let Him come into your heart.

A right Christmas includes WORSHIP.

When Jesus was born, a wonderful miracle took place. The heavens opened up and an angel came down to speak to a group of shepherds out in the countryside. "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. You will find Him wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger." The shepherds went to Bethlehem, found the baby, and knelt down and worshipped Him.

If you are to have a right Christmas, you must come and worship Him too! Does worship have a place in your life. I don't mean just coming to this service and singing some songs and listening to me rattle on for a few minutes about this or that. I mean really turning your heart to consider the awesome splendor of God, to wonder at His love for us, to praise and thank Him for His mercy and His grace.

You know, the dog worships as he gazes into his master's face. The lover worships her sweetheart and the baby worships his mother. But many people, many who enjoy God's blessings every day, go on and on and never lift their hearts to God in worship.

It is said that Longfellow could take a worthless sheet of paper

and write upon it a poem worth \$6,000. Rockefeller could sign his name to a check and it would be worth millions. The artist can take a cheap piece of canvas and paint a picture which in future years will be worth thousands of dollars.

And God can take a worthless, sinful life, wash it in the blood of Christ Jesus, put His Holy Spirit in it, and make it a blessing to the world.

Am I talking to someone today who has left God out of their life. As Christmas is drawing closer, let me beseech you to say, "I will not continue on this way. I will ^{GIVE} Christ and worship a place in my life. I will join God's other children and let my life, my lips, and my heart praise His matchless Name. All glory to Jesus! May the glory of His Name fill all of creation!"

A right Christmas includes THE GRACE OF GIVING.

In the story of Christmas, we see the wise men coming to bring their gifts to Jesus. And what were the gifts. They brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Each gift was a gift of great value. We know more about Jesus than they did. He has done more for us than He did for them. Are we bringing gifts to Him too?

Are you thinking, perhaps, that these wise men were very rich and had many fine gifts to bring, but that you have little or nothing that is worth bringing to Jesus? I tell you that you have a much greater gift to bring than they did! A gift that Jesus wants much more than He wanted the gifts the wise men brought. Jesus wants you to bring yourself and give yourself to Him! He thinks you're more valuable than all the gold in the entire world. He thinks so... and so do I!

Not too long ago, some old churches in Southern Illinois were torn down. Some strange red marks were found in the cement. A chemist analyzed these marks and found them to be human blood. You see, back in the pioneer days, men who loved Jesus built these churches. Their hands were often frozen and bleeding, but they kept on with their work. They gave their own blood for the Savior who had given His blood on the cross for them. What are you giving?

The matter of giving reached a climax on the cross. Look at Jesus as He dies there. What is He doing? He is giving - giving all that He has for you and for me! You and I would be on the way to Hell if He hadn't given himself for our redemption! What are we giving to Him?

I'm not just talking about money. Although if we have money, we certainly SHOULD be giving some of it to further His work in the world. But, more than money, I'm talking about our hearts and our time. We need to spend time working for Jesus and we need to

spend time just being alone with Him, enjoying his presence, studying His word, and glorifying Him in prayer!

And a right Christmas includes TELLING OTHERS ABOUT JESUS.

Look up and listen to that angel on that first Christmas. For many years men had looked for the Messiah. They had longed for Him to come and fill their hearts with satisfaction and peace and joy. Now the angel announces that He has been born. The long night of waiting is over ... the angel has brought the gladdest and sweetest message the world ever heard. In fact, the world has never been the same since.

But men and women are still lost in the darkness of sin. They are looking for something that satisfies, something which will give meaning to their lives, something which will give them peace and joy. We know what they need, for we have found the Remedy ourselves. THEY NEED JESUS! He can do far more for them than they can ever imagine. If we take the message of Christ to them, life will never be the same for them again.

A certain senator in Washington once invited the ambassador from Belgium to his home for dinner. Now, the senator's father was a grand old Christian. He sought always to win souls for Christ. So the senator warned his father to be careful what he said when the ambassador came to dinner and not embarrass everybody with a lot of that "Jesus talk."

When the ambassador came in, he was received with great pomp and ceremony. Soon the old man came downstairs and the senator introduced him to the ambassador. The old man forgot the warning which his son had given him, and blurted out the question, "Are you a Christian?" The Senator was greatly chagrined, but the ambassador was very courteous.

Some months later the old man died. Since he was a senator's father, many, many flowers were sent to the funeral. But one wreath stood out above all others, and on the card accompanying the wreath were the words, "In memory of the only man in America who spoke to me about my soul," and the card was signed by the Belgian ambassador.

In the 1950's a young woman applied to a foreign mission board for appointment as a missionary. She said, "I must go to Japan as a missionary. I just MUST go to Japan." When they asked her why she felt so strongly that she must go to Japan, she replied, "During the war, they killed my brother. I must go and take Jesus to them." Oh, what a spirit she had! Yes, the great need of every country is Jesus, the blessed savior.

A Chicago businessman tells about coming out of his office building on a cold winter day and discovering a ten-year-old boy, blue and shivering, huddled in the doorway of the store next door to his office.

When the man asked the boy what was wrong, he answered, "My father sent me for some groceries. He gave me ten dollars to buy them with, but my hand was so cold the ten dollar bill slipped out and I lost it. I'm afraid to go home."

The man told the boy to go on home - that his father would understand. But the boy shook his head and said, "You don't know my dad. He will be drunk and I'm sure he'll just about kill me. I'll have to wait here until he goes to bed or leaves the house."

The man told the boy he would help him. He took the boy into the store and paid for the groceries himself. He told the boy not to tell his father about losing the ten dollar bill. The ~~man~~ boy thanked him sincerely and then in a moment of great emotion, he set the groceries down, put his arms around the man's waist and, choking-up a bit, the boy said, "I wisht you was my daddy."

Now ... listen to what that man said later ..., "I tell you, I walked around four blocks in the rain and sleet and snow, just to see if I could find another boy who needed some help!"

But, oh, the joy he had is nothing to compare with the joy which you and I can know if we will tell someone else about Jesus. He wants us to do that. He loved us and died for us. He wants us to live for Him and seek opportunities to tell others about Him. We can find our greatest joy in lifting the loads of those who are heavily laden and pointing them to Christ Jesus!

So, let us do these four things to make THIS Christmas truly a RIGHT Christmas:

- Let us make room for Jesus in our hearts and lives!
- Let us bow down and worship Him!
- Let us bring our gifts and ourselves unto Him!
- Let us tell others the sweet old story of Jesus and His love.

Hallelujah! Amen!

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