

Jesus is Christmas

By Ed Kelaher, Rector

The world variously speaks of Christmas:

Hold Christmas in your heart the whole year through.

Christmas is a necessity to remind us at least one day a year of something other than ourselves.

Christmas is tenderness for the past, courage for the present, hope for the future.

The magic of Christmas never ends.

Christmas is not a story of hope, it is hope itself.

Christmas is all about opening our hearts to love others.

“The best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear.” Buddy the Elf

Every one of these well intended quotes is lovely and resonates in our human hearts to one extent or another. Yet, each is profoundly flawed – and even downright wrong.

We are presented with Christmas as something of value in and of itself, but Christmas is nothing of itself without Jesus. There is an intimation that Christmas can be an interchangeable mix-and-match substitute for God, and it cannot. There is an allusion to a make believe “magic of Christmas”, rather than the life-changing delight found in the miracle birth of the Savior of the world. One wrongly testifies to a supposed “spirit of Christmas” when the only true Spirit of Christmas is the Holy Spirit of God indwelling our hearts at the coming of the newborn King. Another proclaims Christmas to be the opening of our hearts to love others, rather than bringing the heart of Jesus to love others. One mentions the “hope of Christmas” which has no meaning or reality without the hope found in the coming of Christ alone. And, sorry Buddy, but the best way to spread Christmas cheer is to sing *about Jesus* loudly for all to hear!

This message isn't to be picky or hair-splitting, but to help us clear away sentiment and culture for the true and actual treasure to be found at Christmas. What God's people call Christmas is not a day. It is a Person and His coming to be among us. And without that Person, Christmas might as well be called Wednesday. There is no Christmas without Jesus the same as there would be no 4th of July without the United States of America. Every good, delightful, holy, liberating, life-giving, life-changing, eternal, and spectacular treasure we might seek in Christmas is not found in the holiday, but in the Baby who was born that day. Holy Scripture speaks of Christmas only with reference to Jesus and never as an event or occasion separate from Him.

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. Matthew 1:21

Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which means, God with us. Matthew 1:23

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. Luke 2:10

To know and claim these beautiful glories in our hearts is to never again experience a let down on December 26th. Christmas is ours to enjoy the whole year through because Jesus is with us the whole year through. He is our hope, our heart, our tenderness, our courage, our life, our joy. Forever and ever. Amen.

Behold the glory of Christmas in Jesus, the Son of God.

Christ the Savior is born!

Ed+