

TEXT: MISC -- TOPICAL

TITLE: KEEPING CHRIST IN CHRISTMAS

**BIG IDEA:**

**LET'S NOT LOSE SIGHT OF WHY CHRIST CAME INTO THIS WORLD**

**INTRODUCTION:**

Doesn't it bug you when people use XMAS as shorthand for Christmas? It just seems like a symbol for the trend in our materialistic culture – the trend of removing Christ from Christmas.

I wrote a blog on this topic ... a blog (short for weblog) is like an online public journal on the internet ... Des has been my ministry partner in this **BibleOutlines** website .. He introduced me to blogging ... this is how the body should function ... In isolation ... if left to myself ... I would have never imagined that I even had an interest or aptitude for such self expression ... But Des drew me out on this ... encouraged me ... balanced my skillset with his technical expertise ... turns out I love it and I think the Lord has given me an ability to use my analytical skills in this medium. I listed the web reference in the notes in case some of you might like some light reading on a wide variety of topics .. you will see my weird sense of humor on display ....

Anyway, I could stand up here and catalog all of the shocking ways in which organizations like the ACLU are stripping every vestige of Christian significance away from this special time of year ... but I'm going to keep today's message short and simple and focused on the true significance of Christmas:

**LET'S NOT LOSE SIGHT OF WHY CHRIST CAME INTO THIS WORLD**

As a church, you will remember we have already made 2 passes through Rick Warren's excellent material: *The Purpose Driven Life* ...

When it comes to outlining Christ's Purpose Driven Life ... the NT is very clear ... summing it up in 3 short purpose statements that will be the focus of this message. These same three purpose statements should guide our priorities as we head into 2005.

But don't forget our worship time ... we can only pursue these purposes by keeping our attitudes properly tuned for the Christmas season ..

- 1) Attitudes of **Joy and Excitement** – I hope we haven't lost that childish simplicity of just being excited about Christmas; hopefully we have added the maturity of a deeper appreciation of its significance
- 2) Attitudes of **Anticipation and Hope** – the Second Coming is what we should be longing for
- 3) Attitudes of **Peace and Rest** – not the stressful frenzy of the world
- 4) Attitudes of **Thanksgiving and Worship** – as we echo the refrain of the angels "*Glory to the newborn king*"

Easy study to put together ... just search the NT for specific purpose statements:  
“Christ Jesus came into the world in order to do X”

## **I. (HEBREWS 10:7) TO DO THE WILL OF HIS HEAVENLY FATHER**

*“Behold I have come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do Thy will, O God.”*

### A. TO ATONE FOR SIN

What was the will of His Heavenly Father? In this context it is explained as offering up Himself once for all as the **Propitiation** for our sins

Read **verses 5-9** – certainly doesn’t sound like a very exciting mission does it – I am coming with the purpose of being slaughtered as the Lamb of God; the purpose of being offered up as a once for all sacrifice to pay the penalty for our sins; leaving behind every privilege and all of the riches of heaven and the exercise of majesty to humble Himself and suffer and die on our behalf

He volunteered for this mission willingly ... because He knew it was the will of His heavenly Father

We have been talking about **attitudes** this morning – What filled Christ’s heart as He set Himself to go to the cross?

- Attitude of **Joy** – **Heb 12:2** “who for the **joy** set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame”

- Attitude of **Anticipation and Hope** – **Psalm 16:10-11** – that great OT prophecy of the resurrection and the glory to follow:

*“my flesh also shall rest in hope, For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol; Neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay. Thou wilt make known to me the path of life; In Thy presence is fulness of joy; In Thy right hand there are pleasures forever.”*

- Attitude of **Peace and Rest** – John 14:27 – *“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you”*

- Attitude of **Thanksgiving and Worship** – He performed this great act of atonement as our great High Priest – the ultimate expression of Worship

In addition to His ultimate work of Atonement ...

What did it mean for Christ to set as His purpose to do the will of His heavenly Father?

### B. (MATTHEW 5:17) TO FULFILL THE RIGHTEOUSNESS REQUIRED BY GOD

Remember my last message ...

*“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.”*

**WHEN IT COMES TO UNDERSTANDING THE RIGHTEOUSNESS REQUIRED BY GOD, CHRIST BOTH SHARPENS THE FOCUS AND RAISES THE BAR**

Talking about heart righteousness; inner righteousness –

Christ exposed the hypocrisy of the Pharisees – those who draw near externally but their heart is rotten

Christ had to fulfil all righteousness in order to qualify as an unblemished sinless lamb that could be offered up for our sins

C. (JOHN 4:34) TO FIND FULFILLMENT IN OBEDIENCE

*“My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work.”*

Context here is opportunistic evangelism – will be talking about that more soon

Food = the fuel that keeps you going

No Distractions; No Diversions

Not out seeking self-fulfillment ... but a life of obedience to His Heavenly Father

How are we all doing in living a Purpose Driven Life?

D. (JOHN 6:38-40) TO GUARANTEE OUR ETERNAL SECURITY

*“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.”*

The Eternal Security of all those who put their faith in Him

TO PROTECT THE ELECT FOR ALL ETERNITY

- our future resurrection is secure

- our future glorification is secure

- our union with Christ and God the Father for all of eternity is secure

**APPLICATION:**

- Do we find obedience burdensome?

- Are we double-minded, serving two masters?

- Are we completely yielded to obey the will of our Heavenly Father? **Rom. 12:1-2**

Should greatly simplify our decision making

- Are we carrying that same torch of seeking the consecration of others around us?

SECOND SIMPLE PURPOSE STATEMENT ... NOTHING COMPLICATED HERE:

**II. (JOHN 18:37) TO BEAR WITNESS TO THE TRUTH**

*“For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”*

I remember Pastor Brian’s message a long time ago: “Does Truth float your boat?”

That really connected with me ... I have a deep passion for truth ..

We are fundamentally “the people of the truth” – if that sounds exclusivistic ...

A. Proclamation of the Truth – no hiding the light under a bushel

Paul: *“I am not ashamed of the gospel”*

We will find two very contrasting responses: track these responses through the Gospel of John

Reception – those who are of the truth

Rejection – those whose hearts are hardened and minds are blinded

## B. Embodiment of the Truth

(JOHN 14:6) *“I am the way, the truth, and the life.”*

We have the life of Christ within us; His character is being perfected in us  
Our very life ... not just what we say ... bears witness to the character of God

Open Door Bible Church: [Followingtheway.org](http://Followingtheway.org) – How consistently are we following the way

## C. Universality of the Truth – it extends and applies throughout the whole world

(JOHN 1:9) *“There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.”*

Importance of world missions – truly reflects the heart of God

Having oppty to touch lives over in St. Petersburg ... partnering with our missionaries

## D. Consistency of the Truth with OT Prophecy

(JOHN 4:25) *“I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us.”*

All of History is truly “His Story” – the last chapters will soon be written

Messiah is coming again; Are we performing our role of preparing men’s hearts just like John the Baptist went before and preached the message of repentance in preparation for the kingdom of God

### APPLICATION:

- Have we fully embraced the truth ... received the witness that Christ came to bring
- Are we carrying that same torch of bearing witness to the truth  
What we say; how we act

## THIRD SIMPLE PURPOSE STATEMENT

### **III. (1 TIMOTHY 1:15) TO SAVE SINNERS = UNITE THEM WITH THE LIFE OF GOD**

#### A. TO BRING THE HOPE OF A CHANGED LIFE

*“It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.”*

- 1) How can a sinner be made right with a holy God?

Example of the Apostle Paul shows that salvation is completely God’s doing; Saul was on the warpath to persecute Christians when he was converted by the power of God ... never write off any of your family or friends as hopeless cases ... God likes to surprise us by displaying His grace and power in unexpected ways  
- maybe someone here feels left out of the true meaning of Christmas ... feeling unworthy of Christ’s love and favor ... acknowledging your need and your sinfulness is the place to start because *Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*

- 2) How can we as believers ... despite years of experiencing failure in some particular area still have hope of victory?

B. TO DEMONSTRATE THAT GOD PREFERS SALVATION OVER CONDEMNATION – AND THIS SALVATION IS OFFERED TO PEOPLE OF ALL NATIONS

(JOHN 3:17) *“For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him.”*

(JOHN 12:47) *“I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world.”*

- God is a Giving God – *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son* – that is the gift of Christmas

The Jews and especially the Pharisees had it all wrong in terms of their expectations regarding the coming of the Messiah. They figured they were a lock for the kingdom by virtue of their national identity .. and that the Messiah would come and judge the Gentiles.

Jesus did not come to save the entire world ... in terms of every single individual in the world ... He came to save people out of every tribe and every nation ...

But the priority of God is quite clear: He comes first to offer salvation

- BUT CONDEMNATION IS AN INEVITABLE RESULT OF HIS FIRST COMING AND WILL BE EXECUTED UPON HIS SECOND COMING

(JOHN 9:39) *“For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see; and that those who see may become blind.”*

How can Jesus say this ... when twice in the same epistle He seems to say the exact opposite??

Jesus came to condemn self righteousness – those who are not willing to admit their need of the Savior ... those who rejected the message of preparation and repentance preached by John the Baptist .. those who are trusting in themselves ... just by virtue of the light coming ... .. but the rejection of that light and truth by the majority of people who choose to remain in the domain of darkness seals their condemnation ....

C. TO USHER US INTO THE REALM OF LIGHT AND ABUNDANT LIFE

(JOHN 12:46) *“I have come as light into the world, that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness.”*

(JOHN 10:10) *“I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.”*

APPLICATION:

- Have we fully experienced the salvation from sin that Christ came to offer?
- Are we carrying that same torch of seeking to see sinners saved?

Rev. Eric Ritz refers to a Christmas card he received:

"If our greatest need was for information,  
God would have sent an educator."

"If our greatest need was for technology,  
God would have sent a scientist."

"If our greatest need was for pleasure,  
God would have sent an entertainer."

"If our greatest need was for money  
God would have sent an economist."

BUT SINCE OUR GREATEST NEED IS FOR FORGIVENESS,  
GOD SENT A SAVIOR.

## **CONCLUSION (JOHN 17) – LOOKING BACK WITH NO REGRETS**

### **A. TO DO THE WILL OF HIS HEAVENLY FATHER**

(:4) *“I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do.”*

### **B. TO BEAR WITNESS TO THE TRUTH**

(:6) *“I manifested Thy name to the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world.”*

### **C. TO SAVE SINNERS – UNITING THEM WITH THE LIFE OF GOD**

(:21) *“that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us”*

This is not talking primarily about an organizational unity; but a unity of spiritual life and character and will

### **FINAL SUMMARY PURPOSE:**

We have been studying the whole subject of discipleship

Centered around the commands of Christ

(:18) *“As Thou didst send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world”*

This Christmas Season let’s remember why Christ came into the world and how His purposes need to become our purposes for the new year.

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### **QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:**

#### **Deffinbaugh:**

“And so it is that judgment and salvation are not two separate, unrelated matters; they are very much inter-related. The salvation of those who are unworthy, by the mercy and grace of God, is closely related to God’s judgment upon those who deem themselves worthy of God’s blessings and who look down upon the lowly. The giving of sight to the blind man is salvation for him and judgment for the Pharisees. The one who is considered cursed of God by the Pharisees is indeed blessed by God. Those who considered themselves blessed by God are the very ones who received His judgment.”

### **CHRISTMAS ATTITUDES – used in Worship time**

1) JOY / EXCITEMENT – shepherds who first received the glad tidings  
(vs. superficial holiday good cheer)

“Joy to the world! The Lord is come;”

“Good Christian men, rejoice, With heart, and soul, and voice;

Give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today”

2) ANTICIPATION / HOPE – Mary and Joseph; Simeon

(vs. dread and letdown)

“Come, thou long expected Jesus, Born to set they people free;  
From our fears and sins release us; Let us find our rest in Thee.”

“O come, O come, Emmanuel, And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here, Until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.”

3) PEACE / REST – baby Jesus

(vs. stressful frenzy of activity)

“O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie;  
Above they deep and dreamless sleep The silent stars go by”

“It came upon the midnight clear, That glorious song of old,  
From angels bending near the earth To touch their harps of gold:  
Peace on the earth, good will to men, From heav’n’s all gracious King.  
The world in solemn stillness lay, To hear the angels sing.”

“God rest you merry, gentlemen, Let nothing you dismay,  
Remember Christ our Saviour Was born on Christmas day,  
To save us all from Satan’s pow’r When we were gone astray;  
O tidings of comfort and joy”

“Silent night! Holy night! All is calm, all is bright  
Round yon virgin mother and Child, Holy Infant, so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.”

4) THANKSGIVING / WORSHIP – angels; wise men

(vs. materialistic cravings)

“O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord.”

“Come and worship, come and worship, Worship Christ, the newborn King.”

“Hark! The herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King;  
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!