

The Purpose of Christmas is Family
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I've preached a lot of Christmas sermons. And I've preached a lot of sermons on the Purpose of Christmas. I've preached on the Purpose of Christmas is Salvation, Celebration, Reconciliation, Peace, Grace and Joy.

As I prayed about what to preach this week – I realized that all those sermons are based on what we receive from God because of Christmas.

But I started thinking: what does God receive? So I started thinking about the eternal purpose of God that was the catalyst for Him sending Jesus to earth to die for our sins.

And I realized that The Purpose of Christmas is Family. That's the title of my message.

At the heart of the Christmas story is family. I'm not talking about Joseph and Mary and Jesus. I'm talking about the family of God.

We see that eternal purpose even in Messianic prophecies like Isaiah 9:6 which says:

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government will be upon His shoulders. And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

We see family imagery here. A child is born – a son is given – He will be called Everlasting Father.

The fact that Jesus is our Wonderful Counselor shows us that in His wisdom He has a plan for our lives. The fact that He is Mighty God shows that He has the ability to carry out that plan. The fact that He is the Prince of Peace means that He is the source of peace. But the fact that He called Everlasting Father shows us His motivation for carrying out that plan.

That motivation is the father heart of God. At the heart of Christmas is God's eternal purpose and that purpose is all about family. The purpose of Christmas is family. We see God's eternal purpose for family in John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him. He came to His own, but His own did not receive Him.

Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a man's will, but born of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

We see here that Jesus came to earth and became flesh so that all who receive Him and believe in Him can become children of God. I know some people think we are all children of God, but they are wrong. God wants children. He wants a family. This is seen all through Scripture. The book of Ephesians reveals that God is a Father who desires children. However, God does not want just any kind of children. From the beginning God has declared His purpose to man. In Genesis 1:26 God said:

Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...

God's purpose has always been to have children in His own image. When Adam and Eve fell into sin – that image was spoiled, so God sent Jesus to restore it. Our everlasting Father had a plan for us from the beginning. Romans 8:29 says:

For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers.

There is God's eternal purpose – as a Father He wants many children just like Jesus! To accomplish that 1 John 5:11-12 says

God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

Eternal life is not something you can have apart from Christ. He is the resurrection and the life and when you receive Him you receive eternal life. The baby in the manger was born to die for our sins so that we could become God's children.

Isaiah 53 talks about how when Jesus died, He had no physical offspring or descendants. Verse 10 says:

Yet it was the Lord's will to crush Him and cause Him to suffer, and though the Lord makes His life a guilt offering, He will see His offspring.

The purpose of Christmas is family! God loved His Son so much that He wanted a vast family who would share His life, nature, vision, purpose. God's eternal purpose is to have a vast family of children conformed to the image of His only begotten Son, united in His Son, who will bring Him glory and honor in all things.

Hebrews 2:10-11 says:

God is the One who made all things, and all things are for His glory. He wanted to have many children share His glory... Jesus, who makes people holy, and those

who are made holy are from the same family. So He is not ashamed to call them His brothers and sisters.

Family is the purpose of Christmas and the will of God. But, not everyone is part of God's family – only those who have been born again.

There is a big lie that people buy into that we are all God's children. This is not what the Bible teaches! Yes, in the sense that He created everything, God is the father of everyone. But the Bible plainly teaches that not everyone is a child of God. In John 8 Jesus had a conversation with some people who did not believe He was the son of God. He told them in verses 42-44

If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on My own; but He sent Me. Why is My language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire.

Everyone is part of one of two families: God's or Satan's. All it requires to be part of Satan's family is to be born. But to be a part of God's family you must be born again! You must change kingdoms, change families, change fathers!

In Matthew 13 Jesus talked about good seed and bad seed. Verses 38-39 say:

...the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil.

Every human being was created by God but not everyone is a child of God. You became part of the human family by your first birth, but you become a member of God's family by your second birth. Colossians 1:13-14 says:

He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

God wants a family, and He wants you to be a part of it. How do we become a member of God's family? 1 Peter 1:3-4 says:

It is His boundless mercy that has given us the privilege of being born again so that we are now members of God's own family. Now we live in the hope of eternal life because Christ rose again from the dead. And God has reserved for His children the priceless gift of eternal life.

The invitation to be part of God's family is universal, but there is one condition: profession of faith in Jesus.

Galatians 3:26 says:

For now we are all children of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

When we place our faith in Christ, God becomes our Father, we become his children, other believers become our brothers and sisters, and the church becomes our spiritual family. First and foremost, the church is a family. Ephesians 3:14-15 says:

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom His whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name.

The church is not a place you go to – the church is a family you belong to. God wants a family, and He created you to be a part of it. 1 John 3:1 says:

See how very much our heavenly Father loves us, for He allows us to be called His children...

Sometimes even spiritual people are clueless: They think they're Christians because they're American or because their parents are Christians. They say things like... "I've been Christian all my life." No you haven't - not according to the Bible. Maybe your parents are Christians, but God has no grandchildren. You have to come to Him yourself.

You have to choose to start a relationship with God. That requires repentance – a change of mind and a change of heart. As Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:7 –

You must be born again.

That's how you have everlasting life.

No one is exempt from the need to be born again to be saved. Nicodemus was a very religious man, a morally good man, an educated man, and a man with position and power. Yet Jesus told him, You must be born again. This shows us several things:

- 1- Religion won't save you
- 2- Moral goodness won't save you.
- 3- Position, power and prestige won't save you.
- 4- Education won't save you.

I tell you confidently that Nicodemus probably lived a more moral life than any of us, but Jesus said he needed to be born again. Salvation only happens by the grace of God. We can't work our way in. We can never do enough on our own. So what do we do? Romans 10:9-10 says:

If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

It takes faith and confession to be saved. And faith is more than just believing in God or Jesus.

Evangelist Edwin Orr liked to illustrate this truth when speaking to college students by picking out a young lady from the audience and asking her, “Do you believe in marriage?” The young woman would say yes and Dr. Orr would ask her why. Her responses usually included things like: marriage gives stability to society, provides the best way to raise children, and keeps you from being lonely in life.

Dr. Orr would respond, “Then you’re married!” “NO, I’m not,” the woman would protest. Dr. Orr would then say, “If you really believe in marriage, then you must be married.” The young woman would then respond, “No, I’m not married because marriage takes a man you love and a commitment.”

“Exactly!” Dr. Orr would respond. “It’s not enough to believe! You have to make a commitment, and there has to be someone to whom you make that commitment.” And so it is with being a Christian.

Believing in Christianity is not enough. Believing in God is not enough. A commitment to Christ must be made. A profession of faith in His saving grace.

The purpose of Christmas is family! So, when you think of the baby in the manger, never forget that those tiny hands and feet were formed to receive the nails of Golgotha’s cross.

Never forget that the warm and soft little body, wrapped in swaddling clothes, one day would have a spear thrust through His side.

Never forget that the royal blood of the Christ child would be poured out for our sins so that we can become children of God.

The Old Testament rarely refers to God as Father. However, when Jesus came on the scene He introduced God as Father. He referred to God as Father more than 170 times.

You can tell how well someone knows God by the way they relate to Him as a Father. Many people have a hard time relating to God as Father because they never knew their father or their father abandoned them or abused them.

But we must realize that our heavenly Father is perfect – unlike our earthly fathers.

Earthly fathers may have conditional love – but our heavenly Father always loves us unconditionally.

Earthly fathers may abandon us – but our heavenly Father never leaves us or forsakes us!

Earthly fathers may seem distant and uncaring – but Jesus is Emmanuel – God with us!

Earthly fathers may not always do what’s right – but our heavenly Father is always good and kind.

We are His children and He is our Father, now and forever. That's why Jesus taught us to pray to, "Our Father in heaven."

We don't pray as servants to a boss.
We don't pray as students to a teacher.
We pray as children to a loving Father!

We don't pray to a hard taskmaster who just wants us to toe the line.
We pray to a loving Father who wants to give abundant life.

We don't pray to a miser who wants to keep blessings from us.
We pray to a loving father who daily loads us with benefits.

This season is not about Father Christmas – it's about Father God!

My question to you is this: Is the everlasting Father your father?
You might feel far away from God today.
You might not even be sure that you are a child of God.

John 1:12 says that *all who receive Christ, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.*

The purpose of Christmas is family!
Jesus came to earth to die on a cross to open the way to the Father.
Wherever you are in life, the Father is calling you home today.
Place your faith in Jesus and be restored to the Father.