

There Is No Place Like Home For The Holidays - Luke 2:4-7

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[0 : 00] All right, let's start in Isaiah chapter 9, verse 6 and 7. I'm sure we all know this very well.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace, there shall be no end.

Upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom to order it and to establish it with judgment, with justice, from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

We've been coming through primarily the Gospel of Luke, the beginning part, a little bit of Matthew, looking at the Christmas story, looking at the people and events surrounding the first coming of the Messiah. Elizabeth and Zacharias, the shepherds, Mary and Joseph. And then today, obviously, we're going to look at the coming of the Messiah, that Jesus has come, that the promise that we've looked at in Genesis of the promised Savior, the promised Son, he's come. This prophecy in Isaiah and many others are fulfilled in Christ. So I guess to give a message to today, it would be there's no place like home for the holidays. No place like home. We're going to look at Jesus and his birth and find out that on this day that we celebrate, well not this day, tomorrow, today's Christmas Eve, right? We celebrate Christmas tomorrow and there's no place like home, right? As long as it's a good home, a home you're welcomed in, a home that's comfortable. And as long as you have a home, we celebrate Christmas and we gather in our homes and the reason we celebrate for the birth of Christ, he didn't have a home on that day. But there's no place like home for the holidays. All right, we can turn over back over to Luke. We're going to pick up in verse one. We covered some of this looking at the shepherds, looking at Mary and Joseph. We're going to retread a little of that.

The text primarily we will look at today will be verses four through seven, and then we'll skip the shepherds and jump down to six through 19. So there's no place like home for the holidays. And here we found Mary and Joseph, last week we kind of left them, that they had traveled to Bethlehem. Oh no, that was two weeks ago. I'm sorry, we did the shepherds last week. The shepherds found them in Bethlehem. But Mary and Joseph, they had a long journey they had to take because of the census that Caesar Augustus had put in place at this time. So Luke 2, chapter 2, verse 1. And it came to pass in those days, there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed, or there should be a census. And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria, and all went to be taxed, everyone into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth into Judea, onto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be taxed with

[3 : 23] Mary, his espoused wife, being great with child. You know, we have a quite a number of traditions, don't we, culturally, around the Christmas story, that are spread around the world. The ideas that we kind of hold as standard, right? Mary and Joseph get to Bethlehem. Mary is great with child. She's got moments, minutes, Joseph's banging on the door. Please, it goes to the Holiday Inn, and there's no room there. And so what does he do?

He grabs her. He takes her out to some barn, some cave somewhere, and just in the nick of time, she gives birth to the Messiah. A little bit later, as the baby, no crying he made, you know, just like the most amazing birth ever. She just plunks him down in a manger, and here comes the shepherds and these three wise men, and everybody's there, and it's just this, like, glorious appearance.

They're following the star. That's our Christmas tradition, our Christmas tradition. We have manger scenes that reflect that.

There's a star. There's Jesus, and Mary, and Joseph, and the three wise men, and camels, and the shepherds, and it's fine. You know, traditions are great. We have Christmas trees. Christmas trees

did not come by way of the Bible. There is many traditions and many things we hold in our life that didn't come by way of the Bible. This type of setting, you should all be standing, and I should be sitting. That's the way they generally would teach, so you want to try that? Except I am sitting, so negate that. But there's a lot of cultural things that we just do because we're used to them. When we think of church, we think of it more as a place than we do a gathering, where scripture focuses it on, focuses on it being a gathering, not so much the place. If the gathering is not correct, well, who cares what the place is, right? But why is it important to know these things, to know what the Bible says?

Because as we've talked about looking at Eve, how quickly she turned away into error with just one little tweak of the word. There's a scripture, I didn't write it down in Proverbs, that says, do not add anything to these words, lest you be found a liar. And then in Revelation, it says that he who would take away from any of the words of this book, God will take away his part from the book of life. And he who would add to any of this book, God will add to him the plagues that are in it. God takes his word very serious. God said that he's magnified his word above his name. That's the name that he says that at that name, every knee will bow, every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. That name, he's magnified his word above it. So his word is very important. And as we go through this, we're going to see some things maybe that are a little different, that the Bible says, than what our tradition holds to. And I don't think in any way, when we get to the end, we're going to go, that's it. Our traditions are wicked and evil. Not at all. I think what we're going to see instead is that the Bible contains so much more than what our traditions do. So here we have Mary and Joseph.

[6 : 21] Joseph has gone from Nazareth in the north of Galilee, as we said before. So the top of that red line is Nazareth up by the Galilee. And then he went by two possible routes, not through Samaria, because the Jews would not go through Samaria. That's why it was so shocking when Jesus did with his disciples. And he came by one of those routes, probably the one through the Jordan Valley up to Jerusalem. With Mary, it was most likely a week's journey. You're talking 90 miles if you were trekking three to four days. But she is great with child. That word great with child literally means to swell like the waves of the ocean. She's very, you know, she's pregnant.

And they have traveled down to Bethlehem. And it tells us here that the reason is, is because the Caesar Augustus has created the census that he wants to know what's going on in his kingdom. We're just coming out of a great time of revolution in the Roman Empire. He's establishing it and he wants to know what is going on. Now, where did Joseph live? Well, it says he was in Nazareth, but he's going back to Bethlehem. When you take a census, do you go back to your family's origin or do you take it where you're actually living? What would the government care to know? They don't care like that my family maybe originated, you know, in some other part of the country. Where am I living now? They want to know how many people are here and how many people are here and how many people are here. So where it says, Joseph also went out of Galilee into the city of Nazareth, or out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem.

Then it gives us that little bracket thing. He was at the house and lineage of David. I believe Joseph was going home. He's going home to Bethlehem. This is where he lived. It was his family's home anyway, and not just some ancestral pin on the map, right? If there's a census today, those of you who are Italian aren't going back to Italy, right, to write down that you live in the United States. You would, where you are, they would want to know where you're currently living. So Joseph takes Mary and he takes her out of Nazareth. Why did he take her? She's great with child. Why didn't he leave her there with mom, right, with her family? We never hear anything of her family until the cross. When we get to the cross, it says that Mary was there, the, the, Jesus's mother and her sister, the wife of Cleopas. So she has a sister or a sister-in-law, but either way, we don't hear anything about her family at this time. Nothing at all. We know Joseph has planned to do what? He's planned to divorce her. But then God says, no, don't be afraid to go take her to be your bride. In the Galilean tradition, he would go and get the bride and he would take her back to the father's house. So he has gotten his bride and he is now, instead of leaving her with her family, who seems like they're not really in the picture, he's taking her back. And it says he was doing this because of the census, because he was a house and lineage of David. All of these things coming together, you know, Mary, I wish I could leave you here with your family, but they, it seems like they've rejected you. You know, Mary has some pretty incredible news that she brought home. And it doesn't seem like her family was too on board with that. But behind every because is God's hand, isn't it? Joseph had to go because of the census. He couldn't leave Mary there because of the situation. They got there

and all of these because, but behind every because is God's hand.

At this point, Mary is great with child, as it says in verse five. In other words, she can't hide it anymore. There's no hiding this. You know, sometimes you see it like maybe a lady who, you know, sure if she's pregnant. You don't know if she should ask. Probably better not to. But then there's a point late on, late in the pregnancy where it's like, there's no hiding it. Okay. It's kind of like, are you pregnant? No. Yes, you are. There's just, there's no way you can hide that. At this point in Mary's life, there is no way she could hide the evidence of the indwelling Messiah. She couldn't pretend otherwise. There is no denying it. We are told that in Matthew 5, 14 through 16, we are supposed to do the same. We are not supposed to hide the presence of the indwelling Messiah. We're told that we're the light of the world, that a city set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bush, under a bushel, but on a candlestick. When I was a kid in Sunday school, I thought it was under a bush. I thought, man, it's going to set the bush on fire. And put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick. And it gives light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven. If that was written today, what would it say? That men do not, what, flip a switch and it makes the whole room dark, right? But you do it to light up the, we wouldn't say the whole house, would we? Have you ever seen a candle light up a whole house? That's going to come in a little later.

[11:24] So here's Mary with the Messiah. It seems like her family's pushed her away. We know that Isaiah 53, verse 3 says that Jesus, speaking of the Messiah, that famous chapter in Isaiah 53 describing the Messiah saying he was despised and rejected of men. This is a chapter that today the Orthodox Jews won't read. A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and we hid as it were our faces from him.

He was despised and we esteemed him not. It was Jesus, right from the beginning, rejected. See, the blessing that Mary had, she had the blessing of bearing God's chosen, the Son of God. She had that huge blessing, but it also meant she had to bear his reproach. Hebrews 13, verse 12 and 14, says that Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

He was rejected, he was put out the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

So for us, as we bear the Messiah, the indwelling Messiah, we have a great blessing, don't we, in this season of this Messiah's soon coming. But we also bear the reproach of the Son of God.

And so they get to Bethlehem. And it was so, in verse 6, that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. So a lot happens here. They've traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem. They show up. That wording there, and so it was, while they were there, the days were accomplished. That does not indicate that as soon as they got there, it was time to give birth. They were there a while. This wasn't quite the imminency that we think it was. She is great with child. But Joseph, there doesn't seem to be a time crunch per se for this census. It's not like if we don't get there by Tuesday at five o'clock, we're going to lose our heads. So if Mary was at the point of labor, he wouldn't have put her on a donkey or said, let's walk to Nazareth. I mean, to Bethlehem from Nazareth. So they get there, and it's not quite as imminent as we see, as it would seem.

[13:30] And it says, And right away, you know, you picture in your mind what that would look like. We're going to kind of work backwards through this, because what I want to talk about first is the inn. There was no room for them. That word, no room, literally means no place or no place marked out. The Messiah is coming, and right from the beginning, there's no place for Jesus. No place marked out for him. None at all.

And they get to the inn, and there's no place there. Well, inn means guest chamber. In the Greek, it's like kataluma. Guest chamber or upper room. We only see that one other time in Scripture. Let's use twice, but it's referred to the same thing. In Luke 22 11 and Mark 14 14, Jesus is sending his disciples ahead of him to prepare the upper room, to prepare the guest chamber, that when he will have a last supper with them. And he says to them, You shall say unto the good men of the house, the master says unto you, Where is the guest chamber? Where is the upper room? Where is the inn?

Where is the kataluma? Where is the guest chamber? Where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples. Remember that verse we looked at, and we said that if you light a candle, it's to give light to the whole house. First century homes were not quite like ours. There was not a lot of privacy. You had like one room, one very large room. Down below was kind of like your kitchen, workshop,

garage area.

You actually kept your animals in there. Your most prized animals would be housed in there. And then the upper room, the room above, was kind of where the family was or would be. So when it says there was no room for him in the inn, Joseph has just gone home. Joseph has gone back to his family's home. Even if he's living in Nazareth now, he's from Bethlehem. If he showed up, it's not like they're not going to know him, right? If you went to another state where you have family and you show up and you or your wife, you're not you or your wife, you show up with your wife or you are the wife and you're very pregnant, you know, they're not going to just say, well, see, I don't really care. Get out of here. Whatever. You know, you're going to make room. Like I said, if one of my girls showed up under whatever circumstance, sorry, Henry, the houses might be full. You got to go and sleep, you know, outside in the tent. She's about to give birth. Give her this room. And so when Mary and Joseph show up, it says there's no room for them in the inn. I think it's more than just space.

I think it was there was no way they were letting these people associate with them. Returning home, Joseph would have found family members or at least those who are living or visiting for the same reason he was for the census. But I think there's something about Mary that we kind of overlook. We think, well, that, okay, she's, she got pregnant. Maybe they think that something happened, you know. But not only has Mary gotten pregnant out of wedlock, she's gone beyond all comprehension and has blasphemed by saying that this sin, that she's laying it at the feet of God and then having the audacity to say that her illegitimate child is the Messiah. It's one thing to show up and say, Mom, Dad, I'm pregnant. It's another thing to say, no, this is God's fault. God did this. He made this happen.

[17:00] And then on top of that, to blaspheme and say that your illegitimate child is Messiah. I think in a situation where there was a pregnancy outside of marriage, I think the family would have been like, you know what? Okay, we'll figure this out. Joseph wanted to divorce her and put her away quietly. But at this point, I think the family was like, no way. We don't want anything to do with this. We see that all the way through Jesus's life in John chapter 8. They're always throwing this idea back in his face. And the Pharisees, they answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father.

And Jesus said unto them, if you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. In other words, he's saying you'd believe on me. But now you seek to kill me, a man that has told you the truth, which I have heard from God. This did not Abraham. You do the deeds of your father. They're saying your father's not Abraham. Your father is the devil. They said to him, we be not born of fornication. We have one father, even God. Always throwing this back in his face. You are illegitimate. We know where you came from. We know the story of Mary. We know. Isaiah 53, 3, we read it earlier. He's despised and rejected of men. Mary and Joseph, when it says here in the scripture that there is no room for him in the inn, they made no room for them in the guest chamber. At best, they're in their garage. You know, we don't have room for you. And she brought forth her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger. The wording there is that she's alone. It's not like there's family there. She's just kind of alone. So this time, the Feast of Tabernacles would be taking place or about to take place in Jerusalem. Jerusalem is swelled. Bethlehem's not that far from it. You have the census going on. You have people traveling because of the feast. And I think there's people everywhere. The place was packed. I think each home was packed. And whatever home they were in at this time, you know, there's all this noise and commotion. It's like, oh, is that, is that cousin Joseph? Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's cousin Joseph. But did you hear what happened? Oh my word. And he's still going to marry her. She's a little, it's, it's, oh, whatever place they're in. Here she is. She gives birth. Do you hear if you're in the other room? Do you hear babies cry? What's going on? But it seems like she's alone. Jesus will say when a disciple comes to him or someone wants to be his disciple, he said, Lord, I'll follow you anywhere. And in Luke chapter 9, 50, verse 58, Jesus said, the foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head. Right from the beginning, Jesus is like, I had nowhere to lay my head. But for Mary and Joseph, as isolated as they may have been, as lonely as it may have been, where would they rather be? When the shepherds show up, where would you rather be? Would you rather be in the guest chamber, you know, having a Christmas party with the rest of the family? Or would you rather be alone in the stable, whatever the stable was of that capacity with Jesus? In verse 6, and so it was that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. They were accomplished. They were filled up. There's

nothing left to be done. That was, it was at the end. It was the point where this is it. It's time to be delivered. The baby's out. Once a child is born, is there anything left that needs to be done regarding its birth? No. There's things you do after the birth, right? Got the umbilical cord, you feed the kid, clean him up, you take him home, you keep him alive. But there's nothing left to do for his birth. It's not like, well, every year we celebrate your birthday. Let's reenact it, you know. Thank the [20 : 55] Lord that's not a cultural thing, right? There's nothing left. It's accomplished. It's fulfilled. There's nothing left for her. And you know what? There's nothing left for us either that's been fully accomplished that we should be delivered to. Mary was delivered because Mary was delivered through the child she bore. The one she delivered, just like the song we sang, delivered her in Luke 1, 46 and 47. Mary understood this when she responded to meeting Elizabeth and John the Baptist leaping in her womb and Elizabeth going, I was filled with the Holy Spirit as soon as I heard your voice. Mary then rejoices and she says, my soul does magnify the Lord and my spirit has rejoiced in God, my Savior. She recognized her deliverer when she saw him. Psalm 18, 2, David says, the Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my strength in whom I will trust, my buckler and the horn of my salvation and my high tower. Psalm 50 verse 15 says, call upon me, the Lord speaking out in the day of trouble and I will deliver you and you shall glorify me. The days have been accomplished for our deliverance. There's nothing left to do. There's not one thing you can add. Just like once a child's born, there's, well, you know what? We should have done some things different about this birth.

It's too late. It's here. There's nothing more you can do. And it's finished on the cross. Jesus paid it all. And the days of our deliverance have been fulfilled. There's nothing left to do now except receive that gift. Isaiah 12, verse 2, behold, God is my salvation. I will trust and not be afraid for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song. He also has become my salvation. There is nothing left to be accomplished. God's day of deliverance has come for all men. And that's what we celebrate. That's what we celebrate the birth of Christ because the day of deliverance has come. Jesus being born into the world meant that Jesus would go to the cross, which meant that Jesus would rise again.

There's nothing left. Paul recognizes this in 2 Corinthians chapter 6, verse 2. He recognizes what he has and the response then because of that. He says, for he, the Lord says, I have heard thee in a time accepted. And in the day of salvation have I helped you. Behold, now is the accepted time. Behold, now is the day of salvation. He's quoting the Old Testament, recognizing that it's fulfilled, that there's nothing more that needs to be done. That's what we celebrate when we celebrate Jesus coming into the world. Continue on in Luke chapter 2.

We will skip down now to verse 16. So Mary has brought forth her baby. She's wrapped him in swaddling clothes. Again, this is the Savior of the world. This is the promised Messiah. This is what Eve back in the garden, when God promised her that through you, your seed, you would crush the serpent's head. And she expected, yes, this king will do this. This is the promise that Abraham had, when God promised him that of your seed, I will establish my kingdom. And she's wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in the manger because there was no place set aside for him. No place.

They couldn't make room in the guest chamber for Jesus. Jesus was not a guest on his own first Christmas. There was no place for him. No place like home for the holidays except for Jesus. [24 : 21] None for him. And Luke chapter 2 verse 16 says, and they, the shepherds, came with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the babe lying in a manger. Jesus will make his home wherever he's welcomed, whether it's in a palace, whether it's in a manger, whether it's the shepherds or eventually whether it's the three wise men who do not come at his birth but come at a later time. But he'll make his home wherever he's welcomed. He doesn't care. If you want to put him in a manger, great. He doesn't care.

Just welcome him in. Make him the guest. Ephesians, Paul tells us this, that that is God's desire, that God make his home with us. He tells us in verse 11, Paul does, he says, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. And then he lists a bunch of those things that God purposed for each one of us, that he wants us to be fulfilled in Christ. And one of those is in verse 17. One of the things that God has a purpose for us is that Christ may dwell, literally may make his home in your hearts by faith, that you being rooted and grounded in love. We live in a world that has rejected Jesus, that's rejected morality, that has no place for him. And yet Paul says right here, man, God wants to come and make his home with you. This Christmas, Jesus

can have a home.

It can be in our guest chamber of our hearts. Verse 17, and when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning the child. So we've read that before about the shepherds. You wonder if it was like that picture, and here's kind of another image, this was really blurry, but of an idea of what a first century home was. You wonder, you know, if they were in a situation like that, and then all of a sudden a bunch of rough and tumble shepherds show up in the middle of the night looking to find, you know, going from house to house, peeking in each garage or whatever, each lower section, looking for a baby laying in a manger. You wonder if the rest of the house at that time was awake to that, and if they were wondering, what is going on? What is all of this about? Because it says that they had made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning the child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. Did you hear what the shepherds said? I know. I mean, Mary and Joseph, yeah, that one, the one with the wife that thinks, you know, God did this. But the shepherd said an angel appeared. Some crazy things going on, and they all wondered. But what does it say about Mary? Mary kept all these things, verse 19, and pondered them in her heart. Our lack of understanding does not in any way diminish God's work or word. Just because we don't understand what God's doing, it doesn't diminish the fact that he's at work. Just because we don't understand his word, it doesn't diminish his word. Mary wisely kept these things and said, I don't know what all this is about, but I'm going to ponder it. Ponder means to bring together in the mind. So she's bringing these different things together and kind of piecing them together in her mind. Proverbs 20, verse 5 says, counsel in the heart of man is like a deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out. There's some things that take some time, take some time to fish out and figure out. So while others wondered, Mary pondered. While others just looked on and were amazed, Mary said, I'm going to think these things over.

So through each of these teachings we've looked at regarding the coming Messiah, we've kind of put this list of circumstances at the coming of Messiah. And so we want to fit this now. If you think of, here's Jesus, the Messiah being born in this out-of-the-way place, a place that was not meant for definitely giving birth, but not even meant for guests. When did the Messiah come? At an inconvenient time. It was very inconvenient to house Jesus right now. Very inconvenient to have Mary and Joseph in our house, but we can't turn them away. Fine. It was very inconvenient. It was a time of great darkness. It was great darkness that was dark because that was at night when the angel appeared to the shepherds. And it was great darkness, great rejection. A time when many were asleep, but those who knew it was Jesus, those who were there at the coming Messiah, they were awake. We want to be those who are awake at the coming of Messiah. It was a time of rejection. Again, there's no place set aside for Jesus. A time when only a few were watching. Only a few. We don't see any great revival coming out of this. Eventually, you know, Mary and Joseph, they'll go back and they'll live in Nazareth. They're going to live in Bethlehem for a number of days because when the wise men come, they have a house that says they've rented and they're in a house. So they're in Bethlehem.

[29 : 19] How old is Jesus when the wise men come? Six months, a year, two years. It doesn't seem like people are banging down their door to meet the Messiah. For unto us a child is born and unto us a son is given and the government shall be upon his shoulders and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. That's the side we look at it from. But before he was the Prince of Peace, before he was accepted as the Mighty God, and before we confessed him as the Wonderful Counselor, he was rejected and he was despised right from the beginning.

Heaven looks at Jesus' birth and coming into the world a little different than we do. We look at it kind of like from the perspective here of Isaiah, what Jesus is going to come and do. Oh, he's going to bring peace, not just to this world, but to our hearts. Well, God looks at it a little different.

John chapter 1, verses 1 through 5, I think is how heaven looks at the coming of Messiah into the world. So on this day when Jesus was born, heaven would say, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God, and all things were made by him. And without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men, and the light shines in darkness, and darkness comprehended it not. So heaven recognizes Jesus for what he is. In him was creation, beginning, life, light, and it came into the world, and they couldn't even process it. They couldn't comprehend it. Why? They

could not comprehend that the mighty God would come to dwell among lowly men. And it's the same today. People will not accept Jesus because he comes in a way they would not expect and that they won't accept. Jesus comes to the lowly. He didn't come to the mighty.

There will be one who will come to the mighty. There'll be one who will come instead of Christ, in place of Christ, who in scripture is called the Antichrist, right? He will come instead of Christ. He will come on the scene, and he will create peace to this mess that's in the world right now. He'll come. He'll put his one hand on Israel, one hand on all the other nations, and there'll be this peace treaty. And Israel today is turning back towards their Judean roots. They're turning to the law, and they're worshiping what they think is God through the law, but it's a setup because they're not worshiping the Messiah. They're looking for the Messiah. I watched a video. It was a number of the IDF. It was like this room full of them in Gaza, and they were singing a song, and it was, we look for the coming Messiah. We look for it. And it's like, wow, that's great. It's like, wait, no.

[32 : 03] The Messiah has come. The days have been accomplished. There's nothing left to do. They think a Messiah is coming, and that one will come in power, the one who will come with the robes and with authority, seeming authority, as the world thinks, the one instead of Christ, they will proclaim as their Messiah. Until three and a half years later, they'll go into the rebuilt temple, they'll desecrate it, and they'll realize this is not the one, and then they'll turn to the true Messiah. But today, Jesus is not the conquering king. He will return as the conquering king. But today, thank the Lord, he is as approachable, and as gentle, and as harmless as a newborn baby, that all of us can come and receive. That is what we celebrate, that we are still in this day of grace.

He emptied himself, Philippians tells us, but he made himself of no reputation. Literally, he emptied himself out of all reputation, of all that would push us away and cause us to stand off.

And he took upon him the form of a servant who was made in the likeness of men. How afraid have you ever been of someone who's helping you and serving you legitimately? You're not afraid of them. You welcome them. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that you through his poverty might be rich. God wants you to be filthy rich. Not in things that are temporary, but in the eternal things, things of eternity, right? That which is seen as passing away. If you had the most, the world's greatest room filled of cut flowers, beautiful flowers, right? And everyone wants to come from all over because they know on this day you're going to set up this display. It's amazing. And your neighbor, man, they got some little garden, right? Whatever. It's not much. But whose is going to last? Yours is going to last how long?

You know that you put that little whatever stuff they give you that comes with the flowers now, they'll last a couple weeks, some of them. But they're cut. They're temporary. They may look beautiful. You may seem rich at the moment, but they're gone. But that the neighbor who's got the little garden, that thing is going to last because it's alive. Jesus came that we might through him be rich and things that will last. Things that are not temporary, but that are eternal.

[34 : 20] And so then Paul says, in response to all of these things, you can almost hear Paul saying, man, none of these things move me. Neither count I my life dear to myself, that I might finish my course with joy. None of these temporary things. They just don't, they don't do it for me. Gifts are fun, but they don't last. They're all temporary. How do you know they're temporary? Because we do it again next year. If you got the gift, you'd never need another one, right? It's like whenever you see a product that's like new and improved, well, you can just replace that with, I mean, the old one was old and irrelevant. Great. That's what they're pitching to you. What you have is not good enough. You need something better. Paul says that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God. So Jesus comes into the world and he offers this gift of joy and of grace, which is lasting and not temporary. We're going to do communion this morning. Seems quite appropriate if you guys want to come up. You know, there's three things that we've seen in this. We've seen that the newborn

Savior, he brings deliverance, doesn't he? That while the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. We saw that the newborn Savior, he gives life through new birth, doesn't he? And Jesus answered to Nicodemus and said, truly, truly, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. And the newborn Savior, he desires to be our guest. You know, Christ came into this world. He was born into this world. He was perfectly fitted for this world. He had a body for this world. We need to be born to be perfectly fitted for the next world. We must be born again. In

Revelation 3 verse 20, Jesus says, Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man will hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and will sup with him and he with me. So the Lord, he wants to be the guest in our heart. He wants to dwell with us. He wants to live there and he wants to deliver us so that he might then take us to his father's house. In my father's house are many mansions. So this season, this season of the coming

Messiah, this Christmas, Christmas, yeah, all has been accomplished for our deliverance. All that remains today is for you and I to open the guest chamber of our heart. Receive the little baby from Bethlehem who would one day become the man upon the cross who would die for the sin of the world and three days later rise again. All that's left for us today is to let him give us a new and resurrected life, a new birth. That just as he was born perfectly fit for this world, he might give us a new life perfectly fit for heaven. As we open our hearts to him, as we take communion, we remember what? That Christ came into the world to die for the sin of the world.

That everything has been accomplished for our deliverance. We celebrate that with the birth of Christ, with Christmas, that everything has been accomplished for our deliverance and we can open our hearts and we can let him come in and that's all that's required to let him come in and be the guest in our hearts. You know, we had read in Isaiah 53 that he is despised and rejected of men, of man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from him. He was despised and we esteemed him not. We saw it even on Christmas morning, the very first Christmas, that Jesus, there is no place for him. But as you continue on in Isaiah 53, verse 4 tells us that surely he's borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But he was bruised, he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities.

So we looked at him and we said, he's despised, he's rejected. We esteemed him not. We said, truly he is smitten of God and afflicted. And he was. And then when he rose again, we realized, oh wow, wait a minute. It was my grief that he carried. It was my sorrow. He was wounded, he carried affliction, and he was bruised, oh because of me. The chastisement of our peace was upon him. One of my favorite lines in all the Bible. The chastisement of our peace was upon him.

[39 : 07] That which was required for my peace was upon God. My peace, for me to have peace in my heart, peace of God, peace with God. The value that God placed on that was his own life. God had to die.

God can't die. That makes no sense. How did the whole universe, we just read that in the beginning was the word and the word was God and the word was with God. And by him all things were created. How did Jesus die and the world not just dissolve instantly? How did that happen?

The chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes were healed. All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way. We still, how often we turn away. And the Lord looked and said, that's all right. I'll just lay that on him as well. The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. So the Christmas story isn't exactly as tradition would make us think, but it's even better, even better. But right from the beginning, there's no place for Jesus.

He was despised and rejected, but there was a purpose for it so that we might one day look at him and go, yes, that was my rejection. You were despised because of me. You took my sin.

And then at this Christmas, we can open our hearts, the guest chambers to our hearts and say, Lord, come and dwell. Come and be the honored guest in my house. So they're going to play the song.

[40 : 31] Look, if that's not you, if you haven't opened your heart and made Jesus the guest, all he wants to bring is deliverance. All he wants to bring is new life and a new birth to fit you for heaven. He comes as approachable as a baby and as innocent and as harmless as such. That's why we take communion, to remember that, to come to the table and recognize that's what Jesus has done.

So they'll play, just sit before the Lord, open your heart and invite him in. And then I'll come back up and we'll partake together. Father, we thank you. What a beautiful, beautiful story, Lord.

What a heartbreaking story. Thinking of Mary and Joseph, or this man who, in great cost to his reputation, but faith in you, took this despised young girl, rejected by her family, by society, did not understand what was going on. Lord, of Mary's faith and trust in you to know that you are working all this according to your plan and what maturity to just keep these things in her heart, knowing that God will sort this out, that every because is of God. And Lord, how wonderful to see that you decided to come into a world of wickedness, evil, and sin so innocently, so harmless, so approachable. And Lord, to see that one day you would take upon yourself the sin of the world, my

sin. We celebrate you this morning. We say thank you, Jesus. There's no place like home for the holidays. And Lord, we are at home with you. We pray you'd be at home with us. And Lord, I pray you would come soon and take us home. In Jesus' name, amen.