

Christmas Eve 2017

12-24-17

When Love Comes To Town

I. Slide1a **Announce:**

- A. **This Wed Night:** Movie Night, *The Peanuts Movie*.
- B. **Next Sunday:** *Looking backward with Thanks & Looking forward with Hope*.
 1. *The Lord has done great things for us, And we are glad.* Ps.126:3

II. **Intro:**

- A. **Think about this:** You celebrated Christmas *as many years as you are old*.
 1. Thus building up many memories. The fav gift you've *received*, fav *given*.
 2. We love *the Christmas story*. Think about it *no one's afraid of a baby* (except Herod). So Jesus came as *a baby*, He didn't come to *scare* you.
- B. **We are all moved by Story.**
 1. We emotionally get drawn in by **books** we read & **movies** we watch.
 2. There are only about 10 basic story types that all *movies/films/stories* fit within.
 - a) **Stories of rescue** (*Taken*: a father *rescues* his kidnapped daughter)
 - b) **Stories of sacrificial love** (*Beauty & the Beast*: the idea that *sacrificial love* will transform...always & completely)
 - c) **Stories of heroes**, *in my example breaking spells* (*Sleeping Beauty*: expressed we are not really asleep/dead *but under a spell*. And there's a great **Prince** that can break the spell)
 - (1) **Slide1b Jesus** story is about a hero who *rescues*, shows *sacrificial love*, & *breaks the spell* of *sin* in our lives.
 3. Ever want to *break into a story*? You can. You can get into **Jesus' Story**.
 - a) *But* this is *not* another legend/myth/or epic tale...Jesus is *the Real Story*, to which *all other stories point*. The Christmas Story is His story of **Rescue!**

III. Slide2 **LOVE CAME DOWN TO RESCUE US**

- A. The *magic*, the *enchantment*, the *glory* of Christmas was all about *the Rescue!*
 1. *His name shall be called Yeshua*. Joshua (*Jehoshua*). *Warrior leader*.

- a) Slide3a/b So that's what they were looking for back then, they thought that when Messiah comes *He will save his people from their...oppressors?* **no**.
2. Slide4 The angel at the time of his announcement said, *you shall call his name Jesus, for He will save his people from their sins.* Mt.1:21 **so...**
- a) He came down *to rescue us* from sin.
- b) He came down *to restore us* to the **final joy** for which we were made.
- c) He came down *so we could know and enjoy His presence*.
- d) He came down *to reconcile us* to himself.
- e) **Or** as Peter put it, *to bring you safely home to God.* 1 Pet.3:18 nlt

IV. Slide5,6 **WHEN LOVE CAME DOWN**

- A. At **Christmas** we have a message from *another world*. It's a story beyond our natural...Christmas is in fact **supernatural**. It's **God entering into our realm**.
- B. The **glory of Christmas** is **not** that it marks the birth of *some great religious leader*, **but** that it **celebrates** the long-anticipated coming of...**God Himself**. The arrival for which God wired our very souls from the beginning *to ache for*.
1. It's a story of Heaven breaking open & a **Son** coming forth, *who became a child, who became a man, who became crucified, who became alive again, who became a Savior. Who became highly exalted, our advocate, our intercessor, our King.*
2. He came **not** in a *cloud*, or as *wind*, or an *earthquake*...**but** as **human**, as **one of us**, and thus **dignifies** our species. [Phil.2:7,8 *being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form*]

V. Slide7 **WHEN LOVE COMES TO TOWN** (*present tense comes*)

- A. This points to **you & me**...God's hands & feet *in our world today*.
1. Him using **us** to **bring love to our towns**...our family, our friends, other kids in school, guys/gals from work, to our neighbors...to our *enemies*.
2. It's the **On earth as it is in heaven** prayer.
- a) The word *aspotolos* when 1st used, was used for Rome's *military expedition*.
When they conquered a city they would bring architects, language specialists to

design this city. They would teach their *business practices, their language, build roads, until* this city, once *conquered*, now *transformed*. So when the Emperor came...*he would feel at home*.

b) So, when Jesus prayed His *On earth as it is in heaven* prayer, this *wasn't a pipe dream*, but a strategic assignment. It's possible for us to have *lives, homes, marriages, churches*...where *Jesus feels at home in*.

3. Maybe one of the best ways to *bring love to our town* is by *who we are besides* by *what we do!*

4. I'm thinking of *living our lives* in such a way, that we are able to *demonstrate* our Lord's *hope, joy, peace*, right in the midst of the difficulties of *our lives*.

a) **Key:** It's learning *not* to *regret* the *past* *nor* *fear* the *future*.

(1) *If* I live in the *past*...*God is not there*...He is not the God *I Was*.

(2) *If* I live in the *future*...*God is not there*...He is not the God *I Will Be*.

(3) *I must* live in the *present*...*God is here*...He is the *I Am*.

(a) *His presence* in your life *divides* the domain of the *disappointment* from the realm of *Hope*.

b) *Slide8,9 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.* (Rom.15:13)

B. **Wrap Up:**

C. *Slide10a* Can you imagine if *you gave me a gift, and* came over a year later, it was still sitting *unwrapped* in my house??? Jesus has a *gift* for you, *open the gift* today!

1. Hark! the herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King.

Born that man *no more may die,*

Born to *raise* the sons of earth,

Born to give them *second birth*. (phys birth; *now* sp birth)

D. *Slide10b* The video in the beginning did a great job expressing *Jesus came for everyone!*

1. Angel said to the *shepherds*, *Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to ALL people.* Lk.2:10

2. Jesus coming for the salvation of *everyone* is especially shown to us by having *shepherds* *not* only in the story, *but dignified* to the highest degree.

- a) Shepherds were *distrusted, thieves, a despised class, & unreliable* (couldn't testify in court).
 - b) The shepherds didn't know Torah. They weren't deserving.
They were the most *unlikely* group for an angel to appear to. [let alone a *multitude*]
(1) **So, good news** for them...is **good news** for us.
 - c) He came in *swaddling cloths so* we can where His *robes of royalty*.
- E. **Slide11 Invitation:** Jesus has a **gift** for **you**, **open your gift** today! [free gift of eternal life]
- F. **Candle-lighting:**
1. In **O Holy Night**, we sing, *A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices*.
 - a) Many of us here today **feel** *the weariness of life and death in this world* and wonder how anyone around them can **rejoice**. [home problems, work setbacks, school troubles, global issues. Emotional obstacles, insecurity hurdles]
 - b) You're in desperate need of *the reality of Christ* to break through your *loneliness, hurt, grieving, or despair*.
 - c) Remember **tears do not** reflect *a lack of faith*. Tears are a **gift** from God that help to wash away the deep pain of loss.
 2. **Remember**, the life of Jesus that **began** in a *cold stone feeding trough*, **culminated** on a *cold stone slab in a cave*.
 - a) Life here on earth is *wearisome*, **but our great hope at Christmas**, is that *yonder breaks a new and glorious morn*. Sing it with gusto.
 3. **Glow sticks** remind us *sometimes you have to break before you shine*.
 4. **Candles** reminds us *to use my life to bring warmth to someone else's*.
 5. **Finger Lights** remind us *this lil light of mine, I'm gonna make it shine*.