

## 1. We are in a season that is known for its gift giving

- A. That's OK - We all like to get gifts don't we?
  - 1). I know it's all supposed to be about giving – but all of us also like to receive
- B. That is exactly why God sent His Son isn't it – so we could receive the greatest of gifts  
 John 3:16 (NIV) "For God so *loved the world that he gave his one and only Son*, that whoever believes **in him shall not perish but have eternal life.**
  - 1). In the history of gifts this has to rank as the greatest - there has never been another like it

## 2. But why did God send His son? Why did He think that gift was necessary?

- A. Why do we celebrate that baby lying in that manger? What was it all about?
- B. Why did God Himself come to earth to dwell amongst those He had created?  
**The wonder of Christmas: Mat 1:23 (NIV)** "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" --which means, "*God with us.*"

**Transition:** Let me give you a couple of thoughts out of many why God sent His son to earth

- A. Why there was that first Christmas morning?
  - 1). Let's dig beneath the glitz and glamour  
 Get beyond the new found excitement that it's OK to say "Merry Christmas" again!!!
  - 2). Let's see from a divine perspective why God would send His Son  
 And why His Son would willingly come – leaving the beauty of heaven for this!

# I. WHY GOD SENT HIS SON

## First reason: To Sort Out Man's Thinking About God

**Heb 1:1–3 (ESV)** Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, <sup>(2)</sup> but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. <sup>(3)</sup> He is the radiance of the glory of God *and the exact imprint of his nature...*

### 1. A distorted truth about God

- A. Man had been given truth about God in the OT but by the time Jesus came it had become distorted
  - 1). Their views of God had become so twisted they didn't even know what God was like any longer
- B. Jesus came to clear this up - to provide man an accurate picture of what God their creator was like  
 I heard a story once about a man who saw no need of attending church, although his wife and children faithfully went every Sunday. One Sunday morning as they headed out the door, not even asking any longer if he wanted to come. He always said no.  
 But, He began to feel guilty. To justify his actions he thought. "I don't like that church they go to. Their always talking about God leaving heaven and coming to earth. I can't understand why God would feel the need to do something like that. Church! What a waste of time!"  
 Just then a little bird flew into the house through the open door. In an attempt to get out it started smashing into a clear glass window. Over and over again. The man was concerned that the bird was going to hurt itself, so he tried to help. The window was the type you couldn't open, so he tried to direct the bird to the open door. But the more he tried to help the harder the bird would fly into the glass. Finally in frustration he thought. "If only I could become a little bird too! Just long enough to show it that I'm not trying to hurt it, I'm trying to help. If only I could get down on its level so I could communicate!"

*Then it hit him. That is why God came to earth. To get down on man's level to communicate.*

### 2. The incarnation: God became man to communicate to man

- A. That was God stooping down on one knee like a father does with a child
  - 1). Getting down to our level to communicate with us
  - 2). Drawing a picture with His own life – This is how God acts – how He thinks
    - a). Words and actions so intimately representing the Father

Jesus could say in John 14:9 *“Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father”*

**Question:** But what did Jesus communicate to man? I want to show you two things out of many

A. He communicated a balanced view of what God was like - to straighten out their twisted thinking

## **Second Reason: He Told Man That God Loved Those He Had Created**

### **1. That He wasn't a cold, harsh, austere God like the pagan gods of their time**

A. Whose anger could flare up and strike you down in a moment of whimsy

1). A God who enjoyed striking you down

We still think like that today – Example the game “Pocket God”

***Pocket God?*** It's one of the top-selling video game applications for Apple's iPhone. Listen to the games description found on iTunes:

“What kind of god would you be? Benevolent or vengeful? Play *Pocket God* and discover the answer within yourself. On a remote island, you are the all-powerful god that rules over the primitive islanders. You can bring new life, and then take it away just as quickly.”

Seeing that game options include throwing islanders into volcanoes, using islanders as shark bait, bowling for islanders with a large rock, or creating earthquakes to destroy the islanders' villages, designers seem to think players will only want to play the role of a vengeful god—***which must mean they think that's the only kind of god players can ever imagine being real.***

2). A God who enjoys casting people into hell

a). Who looks for the tiniest offense and says “Ah-ha now I've got you!”

**Thought:** But God's not like that at all

A. He doesn't delight in hurting you – He sent His son to help you

**Hear His heart: Ezek 33:11 (NIV)** Say to them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! ...

### **2. God desires an intimate relationship with man**

A. He tells man to call Him Father

1). He calls those who have come to Him by faith Sons and daughters - His beloved children

**I love this verse: 1 John 3:1 (NIV)** How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

B. Salvation is all about bringing lost man – wandering man – into a loving relationship with Him

C. This is incredible – I have become the son of Almighty God – I walk with Him – talk with Him

1). I can live life resting in Him – His protection – His provision

2). I have a Father – I have a good shepherd who watches over me!

**Point:** He is a God who is not looking for ways to cast us into hell

A. He is a God who reaches out lovingly – to draw us to Himself

**Transition:** He explained the love of God to man - But He gave a correct/balanced view of God

A. He spoke of His holiness and justice too!

## **Third Reason: He Told Man That God Was a Holy God Who Must Judge Sin**

### **1. He came to bring balance to our thinking**

#### **Man usually falls into two extremes when it comes to God**

A. **View 1:** He is seen as a cold, distant, harsh and austere God – the god of Pocket God

1). The God who is just looking for reasons to throw us into hell

2). Jesus came to correct that – to live out God's love in front of us

a). A God who was so willing to save us from hell that it drove Him to a cross!

- B. **View 2:** The other extreme - He is an apathetic God who overlooks our sin and will do nothing about it
- 1). One view fails to recognize the love of God  
The other view fails to recognize the holiness of God and only concentrates on the love
- C. Jesus gave a balanced view - God is both
- 1). God loves those He has created
    - a). Therefore in love He came to provide a way of forgiveness of sin
  - 2). At the same time if man rejects the way of forgiveness
    - a). Their guilt remains – and God must judge their sin – not one can be overlooked

**The Balance:** To have an accurate view of God we must recognize both of these – His love and holiness

*We see both of these at the cross don't we*

- A. Why was the Son of God hanging on that cross = Love
- 1). Love drove the Father to give His Son – Love caused the Son to come willingly
  - 2). In love God was reaching down – providing a way to be cleansed of our guilt
- Transition:** So the love of God is demonstrated at the cross
- 1). But the holiness of God is also on full display
- B. If you think God takes sin lightly – go back to the cross and look again
- 1). See the details of Jesus hanging there – withstanding a firestorm of wrath  
Why? My sin! Your sin! God was not overlooking it! A holy God can't!
  - 2). Hear the cry of Jesus in His great anguish – being crushed by wrath  
**Mt 27:46 (ESV)** And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”
    - a). That cry is so full of pain - anguish
    - b). Some have called it the cry of the damned – what will be on their lips for eternity
      - 1a). Jesus cried that cry so I would never have too - horrifying
  - 3). If you think God could overlook a sin – don't you think it would have been then!  
When His Innocent Son was crying out to Him  
Don't you think the Father wanted to run to Him – but couldn't – why?
    - a). He is just – and His justice must be satisfied – every sin must be judged!
    - b). In His Son's great agony – He must turn away – *He can show no mercy*  
The penalty for my sin must be meted out

**Thought:** Jesus was shown no mercy so I could be

- A. But if I refuse this gift of love – there will come a time when I enter into eternity  
There will be that day I stand before Almighty God and I will be shown no mercy
- 1). The day of mercy is now – today is the day of salvation do not harden your heart
  - 2). This is not a God to be trifled with – to take lightly

## 2. To view God accurately we must realize there are two sides of God

**Rom 11:22 (NKJV)** Therefore consider the *goodness* and *severity* of God...

- A. Because He is a loving God - He doesn't want to judge your sin on you
- 1). Your sin must be judged but He sent His Son as a substitute
  - 2). He provided a way for you to be cleansed of all your guilt
- B. But because He is a holy and just judge He must judge your sin if you don't take that way  
**Rom 6:23 (NIV)** For the wages of sin is death...

## 3. That's OK – I'm not a sinner! Mind if we check that

- A. Let's use the Way of the Master method – let me ask you 4 simple questions – Everybody tune in

Have you ever lied? What do you call that? *A liar*. God says that is a sin

Have you ever stolen anything? No matter how small. What do you call that? *A thief*. God calls that sin

1). We think it's no big deal – but God says - No liar or thief will enter the kingdom of God

Have you ever looked on another person with lust? God calls that *adultery* in your heart. A sin

Have you ever used the Lord's name in vain? That is called *blasphemy* and that is a sin

1). So if your honest by your own admission

You are a lying, thieving, blaspheming, adulterer at heart and that's only 4 of the commands

2). You have sinned 1000's of times

a). If God is holy and just can He just overlook that?

b). What would we do if you heard of a judge who overlooked somebody with 1000's of offenses against the State. Just let them go!

1a). We would be incensed – that's not justice – we'd be calling for His job

B. The truth is we have all sinned – that is what God says

**Rom 3:23 (NIV)** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

1). Nobody has kept God's law well enough to earn their own salvation - NOBODY

I don't care how hard you try - how good you are - how much you give - you fall short!

2). If you're still not convinced – still think you can earn heaven through your own merit

a). Here is the law that you must keep to make it on your own

Jesus summarized the whole law in two great commandments

**Mat 22:37-40 (NIV)** Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' (38) This is the first and greatest commandment. (39) And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' (40) All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

1a). How you doing? Have you done that every day of your life

Have you ever done that?

2a). I've always tried to be nice – honest – kind – I don't cuss – get drunk

But have you done that? Have you kept the law perfectly?

**Question:** Now do you see why God had to have a plan to save lost men and women like us?

A. Because we couldn't save ourselves? We were guilty and could do nothing to clear our record

B. How grateful I am that God is a loving God and has provided a way for my guilt to be cleansed

**Rom 6:23 (NIV)** For the wages of sin is death, *but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

**Transition:** That brings us to the last reason I want to speak on - why Jesus came to earth

A. He came to die for our sins - to pay the penalty for us - to take our wrath so we could go to heaven

1). We've obviously already hinted at this – but let's dig a bit deeper

## **Fourth Reason: He Came to Be Our Substitute – To Take the Wrath That We Deserved**

### **1. That is how God can save a man, woman, child who has sinned**

A. There is a huge problem with sin – how can a just God justly let us into His heaven

1). He said “We have all sinned”

Didn't He also say: “The one who sins will die” = eternal judgment – eternal separation

**Question:** So you see the problem? I've sinned but I'm not going to be judged

I'm not going to end up in hell – I'm going to be with Him for all of eternity

A. This is scandalous isn't it? Isn't this like the unjust judge who overlooks sin – lets it slide?

1). No! God has not let one of my sins slide – not one has been overlooked!

- B. Jesus was born in the manger on that first Christmas morning as a Savior  
 1). He came as a rescuer – to die for my sin

## 2. God has not overlooked my sin – not one

- A. He placed them into Christ's account – who willingly took them as my substitute  
 1). And the debt I owed for every sin I committed was paid by Him  
 2). He was judged in my place
- B. Remember all our teaching on substitution  
 1). On the cross God treated Jesus **AS IF** He had lived that believing sinners life  
 a). His sins are put into Christ's account and He suffers the wrath they deserve  
 2). Now He can turn around and treat that believing sinner as if they had lived Christ's life  
 a). They enjoy the blessings that Christ's perfect obedience earned - including eternal acceptance
- C. Jesus suffered your hell for you - so that you could enjoy God now and His heaven later

**Point:** That is the Gospel – this is God's Christmas gift to you

- A. God is willing to save lost man & enter into an intimate relationship with him  
 1). He is willing to forgive their sins no matter what they've done  
 Placing them on Jesus and judging them there instead of upon you
- B. He is willing to do that for anybody who will come to Him by faith  
 1). The love of God is extended to those He has created  
 The holiness and justice of God is satisfied because He did judge sin - On Christ  
 Stevie loved listening to stories on tape. His favorite was about an old time one-room schoolhouse where a little boy gets into trouble for taking an older student's lunch. The part Stevie liked best was when the boy whose lunch was stolen offered to take the spanking that the other boy should have received for stealing. The story, titled "He Took My Whipping," is a clear picture of Jesus' willingness to be punished for our sins.  
 One day, when lunchtime rolled around, Stevie's mother heard a firsthand testimonial that this story had made an impact on this 3-year-old boy. Before Stevie ate, he bowed his head and prayed, "Dear Jesus, thank You for this nice day, and thank You for taking the punches." He had meant to say punishment, but that big word didn't register with Stevie. Being a boy, however, he did know about punches. And he was glad Jesus took the "punches" he deserved.
- C. Christmas speaks of so much more than a little baby in a manger  
 1). He was in that manger because of God's love for lost man  
 2). Have you admitted you can't save yourself! Your best is not good enough  
 a). Have you trusted Christ to be your Savior - to take your sins and cleanse you from your guilt  
 b). Listen! Either your sins will be judged on Christ - or on you one day - YOUR CALL!

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## THE CALL

### 1. God's gift to you is His Son and what His Son earned for you

- A. Christmas is about much more than a cute little manger scene  
 1). That birth had a goal in mind – that little baby would end up on a bloody cross

### 2. But the gift must be received

- A. God holds it out to you – but you can reject it

### 3. What must I do to receive it

- A. Give up any hope of you being good enough – being right with God because of what you do  
 B. Cry out to God to save you – to have mercy on you  
 1). Turning away from trusting in anything you can do for God

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And trusting only in what He has done for you

- a). Casting the entire weight of your eternity upon Him
- 2). If you don't know Him – you need to take this seriously  
Today is the day of salvation
- 3). This is a call to faith – to trust Him – you bring nothing but sin – He brings eternal life
  - a). Once you trust Him then He will change you – proof you've trusted Him isn't it
    - 1a). He changes your heart – and you begin to live for Him!
    - b). But faith first – trust Him first – then He will change you