

HOLY
Christmas



Touching Lives
with James Merritt

HOLY CHRISTMAS

Touching Lives with Dr. James Merritt

Series Summary

It would be fair to say that most every American knows the basic story of Christmas. But even though we've heard the story over and over, how many of us know about and believe the story within the story? That is what this series we are calling "Holy Christmas," is all about. The real story of Christmas goes way back before Bethlehem, wisemen, mangers, or shepherds. Before Christmas was ever celebrated on earth, it was contemplated in heaven. What we are going to do in this series is explain why Christmas is not just a happy day and it is more than just a holiday. It truly is a holy day. What makes the story of Christmas so holy is what happened before the Christmas story.

What Should I Do With Christmas

Holy Christmas | Week 1 | John 1:1-8

INTRODUCTION

Christmas is a time for making plans. Everyone always seems to know exactly what they're doing *for* Christmas. But I don't think most of us know what we should do *with* Christmas. In his gospel, John tells us in the first chapter exactly what we should do with Christmas. He is not concerned about the where and the when of Christmas. He is more concerned about the who and the why behind Christmas. He looks at the birth of a king through the eyes of God. He is telling us the story behind the story. And in doing so, John tells us three things we should do with Christmas that we can also do every other day of the year.

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KEY POINTS

1. I Should Share Jesus As The Lord Of The World

Jesus is God's Word. He is the word of revelation. He is the physical, visible expression of the spiritual invisible God. He is God's word of creation – He spoke the world into existence. It was Jesus doing the speaking. As you are going to see as we keep moving through this text, He is God's word of salvation.

So with all of that in mind, we need to think about how we would answer the question: "Who is Jesus Christ?" If we get that wrong, everything else will be wrong. We must share Jesus as the Lord of this world and tell others about Him in the way that the Word of God describes Him.

2. I Should Show Jesus As The Life Of This World

There is a difference between existing and living. Everybody exists, but not everybody lives. That is what Jesus meant when he said, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full" (John 10:10).

It has been said that three things make life worth living: a self fit to live with, a faith fit to live by, and a purpose fit to live for. Jesus can give you all three of those things. Only Jesus, can make you the best person to live with. Only Jesus, can give you the right faith to live by and only Jesus can give you an eternal purpose to live for.

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3. I Should Shine Jesus As The Light Of This World

Now light only has one job and that is to shine. Light only has one purpose which is to eliminate darkness. Do you know what darkness is? It is just the absence of light. You never turn on the dark; you turn on the light. Jesus came to give us the light we need to overcome the darkness into which we were all born. It is the only light that nobody can ever put out. That is why John says, "the darkness does not overcome it."

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What Should I Do With Christmas

Holy Christmas | Week 1 | John 1:1-8

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. If someone asked you, “Who is Jesus Christ?” how would you answer them?
2. How would you describe the difference between existing and living?
3. What is one way you can shine the light of Jesus to someone this week?

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Simply Divine

Holy Christmas | Week 2 | John 1:14

INTRODUCTION

Christmas is not just a day that we celebrate. It is not even just a date that we commemorate; Christmas is about a deity that we coronate. Unless the Gospel writers were liars, unless the disciples who spent three years with him and ran from him before he died but died for him after he came back from the grave, were either all on drugs or hallucinating, then as someone well said, "If Jesus was not God, he certainly deserved an Academy Award, for he put on the best act in history." Those eyewitnesses in one majestic sentence, tells us how to truly respond to this baby born in Bethlehem years ago.

KEY POINTS

1. We Worship The Greatness Of God

What is mind-boggling about Christmas is not how high God can go, but how low God has come. He came down to earth for us. He was willing to go that low. Do you know why God did this? Because God wants us to know him intimately, personally, completely, fully, and spiritually. How can a sinful human know a perfect spirit? How can a perfect God get a sinful person to heaven? Here is what God did. He brought heaven to us. Jesus came not just to tell us what God was like, but to show us what God was like.

Do you know what God would teach if he were a human being? Listen to Jesus. Do you want to know how God would act if he were a human being? Look at Jesus. God walked out of the door of heaven, through the door of Bethlehem and this world has never been the same. Do you know why? Because, that baby that was born was not just God and man, he wasn't just God in man, he was the one, the only God-man. That is why you don't celebrate Christmas as a holiday; you celebrate Christmas as a holy day, because in that baby you worship the greatness of God.

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Simply Divine

Holy Christmas | Week 2 | John 1:14

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What is one thing you can learn about God through the way Jesus acted while He was on this earth?
2. Have you ever tried to explain God in His entirety? Have you been frustrated or comforted by the fact that God isn't completely explainable?
3. What is one example of God's grace that you've experienced in your own walk with Him?

Birth Right

Holy Christmas | Week 3 | John 1:6-13

INTRODUCTION

In the first chapter of his gospel, John makes it plain that this baby that was born was none other than God in the flesh. That is the “So what?” of Christmas. We answered that “So What?” question in the first two messages. Today, we deal with the “Now What?” and the answer to the first question gives us the answer to the second question. Jesus was born into a human family so that we might be born into heaven’s family. Jesus was born as the Son of God, so that we might be born again as children of God. Our birthright is going to tell us because of who Jesus is, what we are to do if we have or if we would like to receive that birth right.

KEY POINTS

1. We Should Reflect The Light Of Christmas

John’s primary life work was to be a faithful witness to the light of Christmas. And as followers of Jesus, we should have the same mentality. If Christmas really is what we say it is, and it is about the one we believe was who He said He was, then shouldn’t we all “Go Tell It on the Mountain?” I am the first one to admit that isn’t the only reason we are here, but I would tell you that is the main reason we are here as Christians.

Now, I realize it can be scary to witness to others. But we don’t have to fear when it comes to sharing our faith. It is not your job to be the light, or even to force people to come to the light. It is just your job to bear witness to the light. It is not who we are, but who He is. It is not how we live, but how He died.

2. We Must Respond To The Lord Of Christmas

Many of the people who saw and interacted with Jesus while He was here on earth rejected Him and resisted Him. They joked about the circumstances of His birth. They accused Him of being the illegitimate son of Mary. They reviled His teachings. They questioned His motives. They criticized His methods. They got angry by His message.

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Birth Right

Holy Christmas | Week 3 | John 1:6-13

Why did the world not recognize Him? Why did the world reject Him? The first and greatest answer is they didn't want to. If you don't want to see the truth you won't see it. If you don't want to handle the truth you won't handle it. But if we really want the truth, we must respond to the Lord of Christmas and accept Him for who He truly is.

3. We Will Receive The Love Of Christmas

You see, when we were born, we were all born not into the God family, but into the Adam family and into the story. Because of this holy Christmas that we celebrate, everyone born into the Adam family can be born again into God's family. The way this birth happens is unbelievably simple and in a way simply unbelievable.

It all centers around belief. It is not a belief in your head; it is a surrender of your heart. When that belief truly kicks in, when by believing you are receiving Jesus as who he said he was, God in the flesh, it doesn't matter what you have done in the past, at that moment and for the rest of your life, you have the right to call yourself a child of God. That is why Christmas is not just a holiday; it is a holy day. In fact, I believe along with Easter it is the two days we will celebrate for all eternity. Because Jesus was born, lived, died, and rose again, we can become children of God. What an incredible birth right!

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Birth Right

Holy Christmas | Week 3 | John 1:6-13

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Do you feel less fear when it comes to witness after hearing this message?
Why or why not?
2. How does it make you feel to know that Jesus dealt with rejection practically on a daily basis while He was on earth?
3. Would you say that your belief in Jesus originates from your head or your heart? Why?
