

## CELEBRATING CHRIST TOGETHER

### I. Colossians 3:12-17

A. Thanksgiving kicked us off into the *Holy Day Season*. We have endeavored to let thanksgiving be our theme throughout: thankful for the prophecies that foretold Jesus' coming; thankful God has given us the Good News to herald; thankful for God's generosity in giving the greatest gift ever given--His Son, Jesus our Lord. And we should also be thankful we get to do all this celebrating together. It is Christ who has brought us together and I am thankful for all of you!

B. Raise your hand if you are thankful for your brothers and sisters in Christ. There are a lot of lonely people out there. This time of year is tough for many of them. But it should not be a lonely time for our fellow believers. When the NT says, "*You*" it's usually plural. The church is not a *me and mine* thing but a *we and us* thing. Lord help us to love and serve one another in growing measure!

C. Colossians 3:12-17 is our main text this morning and we'll be reading it from the NIV today. So, how should Christmas be celebrated? Together! As a unified body. Harmoniously. How should the Christian life be lived out? The same! The birth of Jesus might have been quite lonely for Mary and Joseph had the shepherds not been sent by angels to witness the glorious moment and tell of their experience with the angel and the heavenly host. May the text speak to us and may we find ourselves in it today.

D. Colossians 3:12-17 (NIV) states the effect of the incarnation--the result of *God with us*--the redemptive outcome of Jesus' first Advent...

1) V12a "*Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, (Don't miss this. Who are we? And how'd we become them? Galatians 4:4-7 (ESV) says it clearly: "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons (and daughters!). And because you are sons (and daughters!), God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God."*)

2) V12a & 12b "*Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.*" (This outfit is better than any ugly Christmas sweater! Never vintage clothing, this is year round attire that never goes out of fashion.)

3) V13 "*Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*" (If Christ came to restore peace between God and man, doesn't it make sense for us to seek peace with those round about us? Hatchet burying should become a new Christmas tradition in every household. It should become a routine habit. "*Where are you going honey?*" "*I've got to get some gas, pick up some eggnog, and bury some hatchets.*")

4) V14-15 (What do I wish for you this Christmas? Here it comes:) "*And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. 15a Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. (Oldie: "Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me...") 15b: And be thankful.*" (Last week we talked about the complaining Israelites who God infested with venomous snakes. They were proud and selfish. Ingratitude was their constant attitude. For complainers, nothing's ever good enough; they always think they deserve better; *me-me-me!* God calls us to a higher place!)

5) V16-17 "*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, (Christmas carols too!) with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*"

E. Christmas Day is one week from today. Some of you had your shopping done before Black Friday. Some of you haven't even started yet. You may be greedy old Henry Potter or the very generous George Bailey. You may be stingy old Ebenezer Scrooge or humble Tiny Tim. You may be The Grinch out to steal Christmas or Santa's best helper. But I pray the knees of your hearts are all bowed before Christ, Immanuel, the Prince of Peace, the Righteous One who conquered death, the King of kings who reigns forevermore! He is the One responsible for us being here today. He is the One who has brought us together. Let's give thanks for that!

F. Jesus could have pulled off God's redemptive plan all alone but instead He chose twelve disciples. On the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came like a rushing wind with tongues of fire, He could have just lit upon the twelve, or the hundred and twenty. But when the Spirit moved on Peter to boldly proclaim the Gospel, three thousand souls were saved. The church was born and it's kept on growing ever since. And we are a part of that growing body--God's Family!

**G. As a family of believers we live between the Advents. As assuredly as Jesus came the first time, He will come a second time. In the meantime we have the privilege of celebrating His birth, His life, His cross, His empty tomb, and His occupied throne. Matthew 1:20-21 (ESV) is worth repeating: "But as he (*Joseph*) considered these things (*divorcing Mary quietly*), behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do *not* fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."** (Glory be to God for we here are among *His people* whom He came to save! God rest ye merry gentlemen in this Good News and likewise all ye merry ladies! Merry Christmas dear Family of God!)

\* Close with Prayer...

### Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

#### Colossians 3:12-17 (NIV)

**12** Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. **13** Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. **14** And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. **15** Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. **16** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, with gratitude in your hearts to God. **17** And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

#### Galatians 4:4-7 (ESV)

**4** But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, **5** to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. **6** And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" **7** So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

#### Matthew 1:20-21 (ESV)

**20** But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. **21** She will bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

### Film Clips & Other Links

"Do You Hear What I Hear?" - Dave's Highway  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hVxcsONdIVo>

"What Child is This?" - Cross Church  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=diDL9DzRY0Q>

"Glory (Let There Be Peace)" - Matt Masher  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QW4c6DcxqGc>

"Let There Be Peace on Earth" - Barbershop Quartet  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=waxvgpmnRlo>

Do You Hear What I Hear? - Tim Hawkins (Hilarious)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ey\\_IL57a-b0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ey_IL57a-b0)

### Bonus Stuff

#### Quote by St. Augustine

"He was created of a mother whom He created. He was carried by hands that He formed. He cried in the manger in wordless infancy, He the Word, without whom all human eloquence is mute."

#### Quote by C.S. Lewis

"The Son of God became a man to enable men to become sons of God."

#### Lyrics by Charles Wesley

"Hark the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born king." Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!

**Quote by J.I. Packer**

"The Almighty appeared on earth as a helpless human baby, needing to be fed and changed and taught to talk like any other child. The more you think about it, the more staggering it gets. Nothing in fiction is so fantastic as this truth of the Incarnation."

**Quote by Charles H. Spurgeon**

"Infinite, and an infant. Eternal, and yet born of a woman. Almighty, and yet hanging on a woman's breast. Supporting a universe, and yet needing to be carried in a mother's arms. King of angels, and yet the reputed son of Joseph. Heir of all things, and yet the carpenter's despised son."

**Quote by John MacArthur**

"If we could condense all the truths of Christmas into only three words, these would be the words: "God with us." We tend to focus our attention at Christmas on the infancy of Christ. The greater truth of the holiday is His deity. More astonishing than a baby in the manger is the truth that this promised baby is the omnipotent Creator of the heavens and the earth!"

**Quote by Corrie Ten Boom**

"Who can add to Christmas? The perfect motive is that God so loved the world. The perfect gift is that He gave His only Son. The only requirement is to believe in Him. The reward of faith is that you shall have everlasting life."

**Quote by Laura Ingalls Wilder**

"Our hearts grow tender with childhood memories and love of kindred, and we are better throughout the year for having, in spirit, become a child again at Christmastime."

**Quote by Dave Barry**

"In the old days, it was not called the Holiday Season; the Christians called it 'Christmas' and went to church; the Jews called it 'Hanukkah' and went to synagogue; the atheists went to parties and drank. People passing each other on the street would say 'Merry Christmas!' or 'Happy Hanukkah!' or (to the atheists) 'Look out for the wall!'"

**Praise For The Incarnation**  
**By John Newton**

Sweeter sounds than music knows  
Charm me in Immanuel's name;  
All her hopes my spirit owes  
To his birth, and cross, and shame.

When he came, the angels sung,  
"Glory be to God on high;"  
Lord, unloose my stamm'ring tongue,  
Who should louder sing than I?

Did the Lord a man become,  
That he might the law fulfil,  
Bleed and suffer in my room,  
And canst thou, my tongue, be still?

No, I must my praises bring,  
Though they worthless are and weak;  
For should I refuse to sing,  
Sure the very stones would speak.

O my Saviour, Shield, and Sun,  
Shepherd, Brother, Husband, Friend,  
Ev'ry precious name in one,  
I will love thee without end.

- John Newton, [http://www.puritansermons.com/poetry/newt\\_p03.htm](http://www.puritansermons.com/poetry/newt_p03.htm)