Purpose of Christmas: Time for Celebration
Based upon the Book, *The Purpose of Christmas*, by Rick Warren

On this first Wednesday of Advent, we receive good news worth a celebration, one where we anticipate that upon the birth of God incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth, we shall say Merry Christmas. Just the use of Merry before Christmas tells us this is a celebration time, a celebration of a birthday. How ironic that so often when we celebrate the birthday, we often forget it is the birth of God in the flesh upon the earth.

What could be greater news than what was delivered by the angle in Luke 2:10-11, When the angle says, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.” The you in these verses are both plural and personal. The angle brings to you, each and everyone who hears, this means, you, yes you this news is for you and it is good news of great joy, therefore worth celebrating. This message is for you and for all the people and worth celebrating.

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The news brought is the best news ever and it is a gift of God by God for God’s people everywhere. The gift is God’s love in and through Christ Jesus and in this love, we find out that:

God loves you!

God is with you!

God is for you!\(^2\)

Jesus tells us each of these statements in the Gospel of John. \(^{16}\)“For **God so loved the world**, that he **gave his only Son**, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. \(^{17}\) For **God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world**, but in order that the world might be saved through him.\(^3\) It’s all about the Love. Christmas is about the love of God and that is worth a celebration.

God could have come down as anything, but God choose to take on human form, so that you, not only could understand God’s love for you and me but so that we would also understand our need for God’s love. God choose to come in person and not send a messenger to communicate with us, God made it personal for you and me. It is in this personal connection we come to see the very essence of God as Love.


Fortunately for us God’s Love is the essence and character of God and not based upon our merit. This allows us to experience God’s love continually, without ceasing and not based upon how God feels about our actions. In contrast, it is in our own emotions that we can feel distant from God’s love. Our emotions often betray us though our guiltily conscience or ignorance of the true character of God, so that we believe that God is against us, when in fact the opposite is the case.\(^4\) Our emotions often lead us to fear God. Fear really stands for **False Evidence Appearing Real**. We are told 365 times in the Bible not to fear; this is important to God that we are not fearful, not fearful of God at all.

We are told that God is Love and God is with us, in Jesus Christ. God is for us, God wants us to be with God always and if God wants this, we need to take to heart what Saint Paul says in Romans 8:31; If God is for us, who can be against us?\(^5\) Fear not, God is for us and we should be for God and remember just who’s birthday we celebrate this Christmas, God incarnate….Jesus the Christ. It is a birthday of all birthdays, one to celebrate, one to hold onto as the greatest gift ever given, and one that will never be taken from us.

I would like to end today with part of a sermon that many of you may have heard before. It is the Christmas sermon from the1947 movie staring Cary Grant,


Loretta Young and David Niven, *The Bishop’s Wife*. Let me read to you a portion of this short but for me a memorable sermon:

Tonight I want to tell you the story of an empty stocking.

Once upon a midnight clear, there was a child’s cry, a blazing star hung over a stable, and wise men came with birthday gifts....

All the stockings are filled, all that is, except one. And we have forgotten to hang it up. The stocking for the child born in a manger. Its [H]is birthday we’re celebrating. Don’t let us ever forget that.

Amen