

“A Christmas Eve Meditation”

Theme: Christmas Eve - 4:00 p.m.



Rev. Tom Campbell-Schmitt
December 24, 2006

(Video Clips and photos from *The Nativity*)

We’ve just watched two very different scenes, haven’t we? The first one was a humorous look at something that might have taken place earlier today in downtown Portland. The second scene is from a new movie that retells the story that took place a long time ago just outside Jerusalem. Which one do you identify with the most? Which represents the true meaning of Christmas?

Let me asking you another question: What would you say was your best Christmas ever? The Christmas when you were the happiest and felt the most joyful? Chances are you’re going to look back into your past, rather than choose this one.

Why? Well, if you’re like most people, you’re probably thinking about all of the problems, frustrations, and difficulties that this Christmas presents.

- This Christmas is different from all other Christmas’ because you and I are different people than we were last year. We have all changed and we are all changing. So it’s different from the past.
- There are really Two Christmas’ that we keep in our lives: There is a) the one that happens *around* us right now, filed with all the trappings of the season and the burdens of life. And then there is b) the one that happens in us. That is where the real Christmas can be found.
- Even when we begin to find the Christmas in us, we soon discover that the true Christmas is found along two tracks:
 - The first track is what is happening in us—all of the struggles and changes of life.
 - The second track is the real meaning of Christmas—the real story of what the coming of the Christ Child means for us.
 - The real challenge of Christmas is that you must bring these two tracks together—what is happening in you and the true meaning of Christmas. The true meaning of Christmas is caught up in the fact that God came to earth in human form to show us that God cares about us; that this Omnipotent, all-powerful God came to us to redeem us; that’s the true message revealed in the Christmas story.

How Can You Really Celebrate Christmas if this Christmas is far from the best?

- a) What if you’re having a difficult time and who find it hard to celebrate. What if you or a family member or friend of yours is lying in a hospital bed somewhere in pain and agony? Can you really celebrate Christmas? What of those who no longer have their spouses or families around them to celebrate the joys of the season. Can these people really celebrate Christmas? There are those who simply wish that Christmas would pass...and pass quickly. “Let’s just get it over with,” they say. Can these people really celebrate Christmas?
- b) The resounding answer is, “Yes!” if they can bring these two tracks together—the track that reminds us of what is happening in us; and the track that leads to the real meaning of Christmas. And it can be done. This Christmas is different because you and I are different and it will make all the difference if you allow Christ who makes the difference to make a difference in you!

We Celebrate Christmas Because of What Christ Did with His Life

- a) When we celebrate the birthday of a famous person, we do so by talking about the accomplishments of their life; about what they did that mattered.
- b) We celebrate the birth of Christ because of what he did for us: his life, death, and resurrection. His birth is just a preface to what was to come.

We Can Celebrate Christmas Because of the Life Christ Offers Us

- a) Here is the majesty of the true Christmas: God, in Christ Jesus, has come to offer us both human life and life eternal.
- b) The celebration of Christmas is the celebration of all of the life of Christ; of all it meant; and of all it means. What does it mean? This great joy” is not only about the birth of the Savior, but Christmas also reveals the full meaning of every human birth; the joy and fulfillment which accompanies Christ’s birth is the foundation and fulfillment of the joy God wants every child to know. That’s the kind of life God wants you to have. A full and complete life – in Christ. When you keep the whole story of Christ’s life together, then it can become the best Christmas ever!

The angel said, “Behold I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is. Christ the Lord” (Lk 2:10-11). That’s the kind of faith that sustains you even in the toughest of times. Say those words aloud and mean them and you can have the best Christmas ever!