

Sermon for Christmas Day Morning 2009

What did you get for Christmas? Here's what I got. *More presents.*

Christmas means so many different things to different people. Need some help to work out what it might mean. 30 seconds to make as many words as you can. Countdown clock. How many words?

For so many people Christmas is about what you get out of it. Let's see what we got out of it. *List words on board.*

What does all this tell us about what there is for us in Christmas?

- CRAM: So much to do. We cram things in to every minute because we want everything just right. We cram as much food as we can into our growing tummies. Isn't that what Christmas is about?
- CHARM: Christmas traditions. Christmas is charming - Aah! time, for watching children's nativities or children opening presents, or watching corny films on TV. Isn't that what Christmas is about?
- CASH: Christmas costs more each year. Money for presents and cards, dinners and drinks, charities, church and more presents - making sure everyone has a great time. Isn't that what Christmas is about?
- TRASH: The same old TV programmes, and leftovers of food, wrapping paper, Christmas decorations and unwanted presents. Isn't that what Christmas is about?
- SHAM: Sadly we often end up putting on a front, pretending to be nice to people we haven't seen for ages - even family! Isn't that's what Christmas is about?
- CRASH: This one is for me! Christmas is a time for sitting on the sofa and sleeping! Isn't that what Christmas is about?
- TRIM: Not enough letters for 'trimmings', but it means the same, all the extras that go with the special Christmas meal. Christmas with all the trimming, we say, and most of the time it doesn't feel like Christmas to us until it has 'all the trimmings'. Isn't that's what Christmas is about?

For lots of people that's what they get out of Christmas because they're not looking for anything else. But surely there's more in Christmas for us than this. What about:

- STAR: 2000 years ago, some wise people were looking for a sign to bring them closer to God. They saw a star and they followed faithfully probably for many years until they found ...

- HIM: not a ready-made Saviour parachuted in to help when he was at the prime of his life, but a vulnerable baby born in squalour – that’s some risk that God took with this Saviour of the World, the Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Why did God take such a risk?
- CHASM: So that the huge unbridgeable gap, that was keeping people from God would be bridged by God himself. God loved us so much that he became one of us: “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son” (Jn 3:16) and Jesus “being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross” (Phil 2:8)

There are two more words that are important for us this morning:

STIR: I’m not talking about stirring up a Christmas pudding, but God stirring up our hearts to see and hear the signs and messages he wants to share with us this Christmas; to find something beyond the tinsel and Christmas pudding, beyond the presents, turkey and chocolates. If we ask God to break in to our celebration of Christmas, to stir up our hearts we’ll get more than charm and trimmings out of Christmas. We’ll see through the trash and the sham, we’ll see beyond the cash to the one at the centre of this season, the only one who can give us life and hope: CHRIST – and if what we get from Christmas is CHRIST, then that’s Good News!

To him be glory and praise, this Christmas day and always.

Blessings
Gill