



"How Should We Celebrate Christmas?"

St. Luke 2: 17-20

"How Should We Celebrate Christmas?" This question is important because of the importance of the day, and because so many obviously do not know how to truly celebrate Christmas.

We know of course, that Jesus was probably not born on December 25th, at least there is no real evidence that He was. Nevertheless, this is the day that most people, Christians and non Christians alike observe as His birthday, and this seems to be the only realistic time to do it. But how? That is the question, what is a genuinely Christian way to observe Christ's nativity? The fact that the world often celebrates the day in non-Christian ways is no excuse for Christians to either neglect or misuse it. If we are honest, we must admit that many people even Christians, celebrate Christmas by watching sports, decorating their houses, visiting family and friends or buying presents. Others celebrate it by getting drunk, some beginning at the office party on the last working day before Christmas, and not sobering up until sometime after December 25th, or even after the New Year.

But how should a Christian celebrate Christmas? I wish to say firstly, that by far the best and greatest way to celebrate Christmas is by becoming a Christ follower, the one whose birth we commemorate. It has to do with why Jesus came. The Bible tells us that the birth of Jesus was unlike all other births, in that Jesus existed before as the second person of the Godhead, and that He became man, not to provide us with a sentimental story to share with our children, or a theme for great musical compositions even though that's commendable, but He was born in order to grow to maturity and then to die for our sin as the means of our salvation. Anyone can understand Christmas by three prepositions:

1. **I am a sinner**
2. **As a sinner I need a Saviour**
3. **Jesus is that Saviour**

Therefore, the best way to celebrate Christmas is to believe on Jesus as your Saviour. If you have never done that, then Christmas is a great season in which to believe on Him. But, assuming that you have believed on Him, and you are a Christian, what can you do to add to this in order to celebrate Christmas properly? I think the passage in **St. Luke 2: 17-20** is a report of how those who witnessed the first Christmas observed it. This passage suggests how we can celebrate Christmas properly. Let me suggest four ways to celebrate Christmas:

1. Tell others about it:

In the first place, we are told that after the shepherds had come to Bethlehem and seen the baby Jesus, they "**spread the word**" about what was told to them concerning the child. In other words, the shepherds became witnesses of the event. The reason they became witnesses are is there was an event, a great event and others needed to hear about it. **Share the Good News!**



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2. **Secondly, to wonder at the event itself:**

That is suggested in St. Luke 2:18. "*And all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.*" This was not the kind of amazement that was merely a temporary fascination with something unusual. This was a holy amazement, which is a proper wonder at those acts of God that are beyond human comprehension. From the very beginning, God's dealing with us has been a cause for amazement. Out of darkness God spoke to call forth life and order. That is cause for wonder. But of all those dealings, that which should evoke our greatest amazement is the incarnation of the Son of God, which we mark especially at Christmas. God became man! The deity in human flesh! How can that be? We cannot understand it; but it is true nevertheless, and we marvel at it, or at least we should marvel at it. Do you want to properly celebrate Christmas? Then be amazed at it! Allow it to stretch your mind. Let us learn to recapture our own sense of amazement of the incarnation.

3. **Thirdly, To Ponder its meaning:**

Mary we are told, "*Treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart*" (St. Luke 2:19). Pondering is connected with amazement, but it also goes beyond amazement in an attempt to understand the mystery or to figure it out. It implies a going beneath the surface. It involves an effort to enter into the heart and counsels of God. Do that this Christmas. Spend some time thinking over what you know about God and seek to understand the ways of God more fully. As you ponder these things, allow God to teach you more about Himself.

4. **Finally, By Glorifying God and Praising Him:**

"*The shepherds returned glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen*" (St. Luke 2:20). To glorify God is to worship Him by words from the heart. Acknowledge God's worthship., It is in that sense a doxology, which means to express a right opinion of God verbally. The birth of Christ teaches us of God's love; For God loved us so much that He became man in order to die for us. It also teaches us of God's power, for an incarnation is beyond our ability to even imagine, let alone to bring into being. We see His wisdom, His mercy, His grace. We can speak of His goodness and His love. We can do that in song. Praising God is essentially an act of glorifying God with our whole being, and music quite naturally plays a part. That is why carols are so much a rightful part of Christmas, for when they are sung by those who understand them, they are a means of Praise.

Celebrate this Christmas by first being amazed at Christ's birth, Ponder its meaning, then praise God for it. Then when you have done that and are qualified to speak, go and tell others.

May God give you Grace to do that, so that the world would resound with His **PRAISE**.

On behalf of my wife, Pauline, and, the ministry of the Church of God of Prophecy of Eastern Canada, we wish you a **JOYFUL CHRISTMAS** and a **WONDERFUL NEW YEAR**.

Blessings!

Woodroe Thompson, *Administrative Bishop*