

Luke 2:1–7

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[0 : 0 0] Buenas noches. Feliz Navidad. It's my pleasure to welcome you, to be here with you. My name is Oscar Leiva. I'm the pastor in the Pilsen Congregation.

I wanted, for a moment, to speak to you about Christmas. I want to try to answer two questions this evening to give some clarity, to affirm your conviction, and to give you confidence as it relates to Christmas.

Two simple questions. Why do we celebrate Christmas? And what should we believe about Christmas? Why do we celebrate Christmas?

For most of us, we celebrate Christmas for various reasons. If you're a child here this evening, you celebrate Christmas because of the end goal, the presents tomorrow.

We celebrate it because of what we're going to get, children. But it's also, if you're a child, it's contingent upon the gift.

[1 : 0 7] I mean, the child is never happy when they receive just merely socks. But think about also why businesses celebrate Christmas. It's not about presents.

It's about profit. Profit. If they can simply move the revenue from red to black to even green during the season.

Profit. Profit. And for most of us adults, we celebrate Christmas merely just to, not for the presents, not for profit, but to pause.

To get away. Either to take a vacation. To pause from work. To pause from school. To just be able to relax.

We celebrate Christmas for various reasons. Now, I don't think that we can be indifferent about Christmas. It fills our TV screens.

[2 : 0 9] It fills the advertisements on the newspaper. It fills every bit of why the season is here. We can't be indifferent about Christmas.

Nor should we be secretists about it. That is the amalgamation of Christianity and consumerism. We have to have a clear perspective when we think about why we celebrate Christmas.

You see, this season here in the church season here, the season of Advent invites us to yearn for Jesus. Jesus as servant.

Jesus as Savior. Jesus as the Prince of Peace. The Wonderful Counselor. The Mighty God. This season is a season in where we reflect about the birth of Jesus.

Christmas is a pronouncement of God entering into this world. Emmanuel, God with us. God dealing with our sins.

[3 : 1 6] For he shall be called Jesus, which means he will take away the sins of the world. It is a pronouncement. Jesus is not some form of belief that is only for those who are elite.

Nor is it about those who are seeking prosperity. Nor for those who are seeking political power. This season is a season about Jesus.

The humble Savior. The King. Who came. Lying in a manger. In the dirt. In the grit. In the grind of it all.

So we all celebrate Christmas. But what's the ultimate reason of why you celebrate Christmas? Let me ask you another question. What should we believe about Christmas?

Well, the scriptures that was already read to you in Luke chapter 2 verses 1 through 7. Answers the question, I believe, masterfully. We notice in chapter 2 of verses 1 through 7.

[4 : 23] Luke, the author, gives three reasons why the early Christians. We're to have confidence and conviction and clarity as it relates to the birth of Jesus. Three reasons.

Simply because the birth of Jesus is situated in history. It is seated in Jewish heritage. And lastly, it is scandalously humiliating.

The birth of Jesus. It's historical. It has heritage. Rich heritage. And lastly, it is indeed humiliating.

Take a moment with me to think about the idea of it being situated in history. Children, think about this. Caesar Augustus. There. First century Palestine.

The Roman ruler. The one who was the ultimate one seeking to rule all of the world, known world. It was ascribed to him, this Roman ruler, Caesar Augustus, who was the Roman ruled leader, the statesman and military leader who controlled the imperial Rome.

[5 : 33] It was told of him that ancient ascriptions tell us that he is the son of God. It was attributed to him being the son of God.

It was attributed to him that he was the savior. It was attributed to him that he was Lord and the one who ends wars. He's the one that proclaimed *prox ramana*.

When he was born, they said that it was good news to the whole world.

What we see here is Luke deliberately situating the birth of Jesus by telling us that Jesus was born in the days of Caesar Augustus.

Two political leaders, one global event. Caesar Augustus and Cornelius of Syria. And what was the global event?

[6 : 30] Everyone had to be registered. Everyone was to go back to their hometown and register. And the ultimate reason why they had to register was because of what Caesar Augustus wanted.

He wanted to know those whom he ruled over. He wanted taxes. He wanted to know how much money, how much profit he could make during that season.

You see, Luke wants us to understand that the whole world came for this one global event under these two political leaders. And Luke deliberately highlights these two historical people.

Now, notice this, that not only is it situated, the birth of Jesus, in this historical and actual events, but it actually has rich Jewish heritage, which then makes it possible for Jesus fulfilling the potential of being the promised king, of what all the prophets have been promising, of what from Abraham and Isaac and Jacob have been looking forward, and Moses have been anticipating.

All the prophets of Isaiah and Jeremiah have been speaking about this one. And so we know that Joseph, in verse 4, he also went to Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

[8 : 11] You see, we're told of these characters, these three new characters, not two political leaders, but now three humble, almost really insignificant people, but yet have yet this rich Jewish heritage.

They are both of the lineage of David, both the potential of reigning in and ushering a new king, a faithful king at that.

Joseph comes, and at that time was living in Nazareth, his ancestral home, and was heading towards Bethlehem, of course, to fulfill all what the promises of the Scriptures in that day.

You see, we should have confidence this Christmas, because Luke deliberately speaks about Jesus being born with this historical event, but also that it's seeded in this rich Jewish heritage, Jesus fulfilling the promises of God that are yes in him.

But lastly, just for the sake of time, because of the sake of time, children, I want you to understand the last point of why you should have confidence about the Christmas story.

[9 : 36] And it's the irony of Christmas. That is that it is scandalously humiliating. Here, the king of all people, born, laying in a manger, Jesus, there, lying there, in this manger.

We're told in the Scriptures that while they were there, registering, preparing to pay the taxes, the time came for Mary to give birth.

And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloth and laid him in a manger because there was no place for them in the inn. You see, she gives birth to her firstborn.

It was the greatest miracle in history. God, the eternal God, the creator, the sustainer of all life, enters into this world through a birth, through a virgin birth at that.

Now, the son of God, being born as a man, as a baby, humbly, there at the stable in this obscure village of Judea.

[10 : 56] This Christmas story, the one that we look forward to, is one that should give us great confidence and conviction that God is about reversing the world's order.

Jesus himself is the son of God. Not Caesar Augustus, though he might be that in his day, but Jesus rules forevermore and forever for all people.

This one, the firstborn, laid there in the manger, scandalously gives himself, relinquishes all his riches, all his accolades, comes down in an obscure village in order that we who are poor might be able to have one who is poor and find the fullness of riches in Christ.

Christmas is about recognizing the true presence of God himself with us. That is, Christmas is the one in where we see Jesus there.

So the natural conclusion then for us this evening is simply to worship. It is to bend the knee. It is to humbly submit ourselves to this one who has given himself in this way.

[12 : 26] Receive the gift of Christ this evening. Love him, adore him, worship him. Let us pray. our Father, we are thankful that you call us to yourself and that you remind us, Lord, of that humiliating night where the Son of God came and entered into this world in order to be the Savior of this world, in order to be our Savior.

We rejoice in that eternal presence that we have with you. And now, Lord, may your people be encouraged and may they be delight in the goodness that's found in Christ.

We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.