

Christmas Isn't for Perfect People

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[0:00] Amen. Amen.

So Christmas is supposed to be perfect, right? I saw that on the internet, so it has to be true. On top of that, I've seen it in a bunch of commercials, so that pretty much settles it as far as I'm concerned. So, we all get the perfect Christmas celebration, right? Everyone gets everything on their Christmas list. The whole family gets together. We sing Christmas carols and drink eggnog, and the presents are perfectly stacked under the tree.

And that's all fine and good, except for when it's not like that. Now, I will say it definitely seemed more like that to me when I was a kid, but even then, I knew it wasn't perfect.

And I knew it wasn't perfect because it was the one time a year I could be talked into eating fruitcake. And fruitcake will ruin any child's Christmas, let's be real. If we have any fruitcake lovers out there, I would apologize, but I don't think there are any.

[1:42] But the honest thing is, our lives are a little too messy for a perfect Christmas, aren't they? Things don't go as planned.

We get stressed out. We might find ourselves missing loved ones who are no longer with us. We might be dealing with some kind of heartache, some kind of family trouble. We might be having difficulties at work.

On top of all of that, we are not perfect people. So what does it mean for us to celebrate Christmas when our celebration isn't perfect and our lives aren't perfect either?

Well, let's stop and think for a second. The world that we live in isn't perfect. Less than a week ago, 12 people were killed and many more injured in a terrorist attack in Berlin.

A couple of weeks ago, dozens of our Christian brothers and sisters in Egypt were killed in the bombing of a cathedral. And that, of course, is just one example of what has been an intense and difficult year around the world.

[2:51] We see instability in the Middle East, in places like Iraq and Syria. We see that people are suffering. We see that Christians are being persecuted for their faith. We see that war is being waged.

Yet tonight, we say, peace on earth. That must mean something. And here's what it means.

It means that the perfect peace that we celebrate is greater than the imperfection of our world.

Greater than the imperfection of our messy lives.

And it is. And it must mean that the perfect peace that we celebrate will have the last word over suffering and evil and pain. And the strife that we see in this world.

And it does have the last word. Because in Jesus, God has stepped into our messy world to save broken people like us. And he will not and cannot fail.

[3:56] And that is what we remember tonight. We remember that no matter how thick the darkness seems, how uncertain the world seems, how messy everything is, Jesus was born and died and rose again, and he will have the victory forever and ever.

Yes, our lives can be messy for all kinds of reasons. But for most of them, we can trace that messiness and brokenness back to the presence of sin in the world.

Now sometimes the mess is of our own making. We do sinful and stupid things and make messes for ourselves. Sometimes it's other people sinning against us.

Sometimes it's the fragility of our bodies that we see in illness and in death. It's all because of sin in this world.

Now, here's the thing. Regardless of what you might have read on the internet, at Christmas, we are not called simply to turn a blind eye to all that and pretend that it isn't there.

[5:05] At Christmas, we are not called to pretend that the darkness isn't there. We are called to remember, though, that the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.

We celebrate that the light, the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Son, who took on human flesh, we celebrate Him. Him who came into this messy world to save messy, broken, sinful people like us. And thank God that He did. God became a baby who grew into a man. He lived. He suffered. He died.

He was like us in all ways except for sin. He was born for us. He suffered for us. He died for us. And rose again for us.

Why? Because God loved us so much that He sent His only Son to bear our griefs and carry our sorrows, to be pierced for our transgressions, and to be crushed for our iniquities.

[6:09] to share in our pain, to share in our sufferings, to save us from our sins. Now this time of year, a time that's supposed to be festive and happy, the flip side of that is that the things that hurt can seem to hurt even more than usual.

We might be tempted more than usual to ask where God is in the mess. Where was God when I lost my job? Where was God when my loved one died?

Where is God when I'm hurting and when I feel lonely? Where is God? Tonight, we look for Him and we find Him as a baby lying in a manger.

We look and we see the man He would grow into, a man of sorrows acquainted with grief. We look even further on from that and we see Him beaten and bloody, hanging on a cross, dying a death that He didn't deserve.

So where is God? Right in the mess with us. Taking the burden of our sins and sorrows on Himself. That's where He is.

[7:23] The perfect, sinless, eternal Son of God taking on human flesh, becoming one of us, coming into this messy world to save broken people like us.

That's where we find Him. Even though we have this expectation that our celebration of Christmas is supposed to be perfect, it never is, is it?

Why not? Well, here's a question that I think will help answer that question. Are we perfect people? No, we're not. If our celebration of Christmas isn't perfect, we shouldn't be surprised. We are imperfect people living in an imperfect world.

But here is the amazing thing. What we celebrate at Christmas isn't for perfect people. It is for sinful, broken people.

[8:23] Jesus didn't come to save perfect people. He came to save sinners. As we read in Luke 5.32, Jesus Himself said, I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

And if you're anything like me, you will find that to be amazing news because I am not righteous. I am a sinner. And I am amazed that Jesus came for me. God didn't send His Son because we deserved it.

God sent His Son because we were helpless and we couldn't save ourselves. God didn't send His Son because we were righteous. God sent His Son because we were unrighteous.

God didn't send His Son because we were sinless, but because we were hopeless sinners who desperately needed a Savior. Our celebration of Christmas is never perfect.

Some years it might be disappointing or even painful, but the one that we celebrate at Christmas, the Lord Jesus, He is perfect, and He is perfectly able to save those who aren't perfect, and that is us.

[9:43] We rejoice at Christmas not because our lives are perfect, not because the presents look wonderful stacked under the tree, and not even because someone spiked the eggnog.

We rejoice at Christmas because Christmas reminds us that the gospel, which is our only hope as messy people in a messy world, is true.

we rejoice that God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

We rejoice that by the one man, Jesus Christ, that baby in the manger that we are celebrating tonight, many will be made righteous. Many who were unrighteous will be made righteous.

We rejoice that the light, our Lord Jesus, has come into the world, and that to all who received Him as Savior, He has given the right to become children of God.

[10:46] We rejoice that as we read in Titus 3 a few moments ago, when the goodness and loving kindness of God, our Savior, appeared, He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewal of the Holy Spirit.

