

# Christmas Eve 5pm Service

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Preacher: Rev. Aaron Roberts

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Well, good evening everybody, boys and girls. My name is Aaron. I'm one of the ministers on staff here at St. John's. If you're new, welcome. It's so lovely to have you here.

Let me tell you something about myself. I really like watches, like nice, like really good quality watches. I don't own one. I don't own one though, because before my stepfather Bill died, he gave my mother a watch.

And he said to her, make sure Aaron gets this watch when I'm gone. Anyway, he died about five years ago, and the watch went missing from the estate, lost in the mayhem.

But I've always told myself, Aaron, don't buy an expensive watch, because there's one at your mother's house somewhere, somewhere there. So I told myself that story for years.

I visited my mum about three months ago in the old country, and I thought, well, now I've got to find this thing. So I spent a long time searching the house, and I found it in a little black velvet pouch in a box in a dark corner of her closet.

[ 1 : 1 3 ] And here it is. Here's the watch. This is all a true story, by the way. This is a true story. Here's the watch right here. So I opened it up in a room, and this is it. So you probably can't tell from there.

18 karat gold Rolex. So, obviously, I was pretty stoked. So I immediately drove to my brother's house.

He's a watch collector, and I showed him a Rolex, and he said, Ah, yes, that watch. I bought that for Bill in Bali. Ten years ago for 20 bucks.

So this watch that I'd been pining for for years turned out to be a fake. And I cannot, I cannot tell you how disappointed I was to find that out.

So why am I telling you all this? Because I think my watch story, for some of us, is a bit like the weeks leading up to Christmas, I think. Anticipation, anticipation, anticipation.

[ 2 : 3 1 ] And then you're just disheartened. Anticipation, anticipation, anticipation, anticipation, anticipation, and I think leading up to Christmas, you tell yourself, and I don't know, maybe I'm alone in this, you sort of go, Oh, it's going to be great, it's going to be great, it's going to be great, it's going to be so good, so good.

But for a lot of us, it's just hard. Christmas Day is just hard. Before heading to see family this year, my wife is down there at the moment, actually, with my kids in North Carolina, so I can say whatever I want.

So before heading down there, my sister-in-law called my wife and said, Okay, so here's all the family dramas you need to be aware of before the visit.

I don't know if you can relate to this, but I find sometimes these auxiliary things can take over the season, can't they? Sometimes. If you're the host house, being stressed out about being the perfect host, being worried if your children will behave in front of the extended family, I'm like, No, of course they're not going to behave.

It's going to be a disaster. And will your extended family judge you for that? Yes. Like, of course they're going to judge you.

[ 3 : 46 ] But this is Canada, so they won't be explicit. It'll be like, it'll be implicit. They'll come up to you afterwards, you know, when you're washing the dishes, and they'll say something like, Gee, I just, I just, you know, I read this great book on parenting this year.

And it's like, your auntie, great book on parenting, and it was just so good. It was like, really good for like, kids who are like, difficult, you know.

Anyway, not sure why I'm telling this, but you know, let me send you the link. Let me just send you the link to the book. It's a shame, isn't it?

Sometimes these things can just hijack Christmas. Given all that, it's wonderful, isn't it? To be able to take some time, like right now, take this time right now, to refocus, refocus at what is at the center of Christmas.

And hopefully turn down the volume on some of these other things that can capture us a little bit. So what's at the center of Christmas?

[ 4 : 53 ] Well, it's explained really well in our reading, Luke 2, 1 to 20. It's the classic Christmas reading, isn't it? It's got Mary and Joseph. It's got a baby and a manger, angels and shepherds. It's brilliant stuff.

Let's get straight to it. We're not going to mess around. What is the big point of this story? And the big point, what is the meaning of Christmas? And the angels tell us in verse 11, for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a savior who is Christ the Lord.

The big point is God became a baby. The creator of the universe became a human baby. Now, if you are not super religious, this is kind of a, you know, this might be a wild thing to wrap your head around.

I understand. So maybe a good question to ask is why? Why would God do this? Like, why bother? Why would God do this?

Let me tell you a story. Dorothy Sayers was a woman who lived in the early 1900s. This is a true story. She was a committed Anglican. She was an amateur theologian. She was one of the first women to graduate Oxford.

[ 6 : 04 ] And she describes herself, and this will be important later, she describes herself as being not particularly attractive. Now, some of you may have heard of her because she wrote, what she's most famous for is she's a crime, she's a novelist.

She's a crime writer. She wrote a series, a long series of books about a guy called Lord Peter Wimsey, who was a detective who solved crimes. Now, about halfway through the series, Dorothy Sayers introduced a new fictional character called Harriet Vane.

And Harriet Vane in the books, and this is interesting, Harriet Vane, this new fictional character, was one of the first female graduates of Oxford, was described in the books as not being particularly attractive, and wrote crime novels.

And in the series, Harriet Vane meets Lord Peter Wimsey, they fall in love, and they get married, and they solve crimes together. Fantastic, right? Now, here's what some people think.

Some people think that Dorothy Sayers looked into the world that she had created in these books, looked at the man she had created, a lonely man, fell in love with him, fell in love with him, and so wrote herself into the story.

[ 7 : 23 ] She looked at the world she had made, and wrote herself into the story. Now, some of you might think, oh, that is very sweet.

Isn't that lovely? But do you realize this? This is the story of Christmas. God looked at the world he created, the people he made, he loved them, and he saw the mess we were in, and so he wrote himself into the story.

This is the heart, truth, at the center of Christmas. There is a God who loved us so much, he became one of us, so we could know him.

So, there's the answer to the first question. Why did God do it? One more really quick question, though. Why come into the world like this? Now, baby, why not, if God's going to come into, why not just turn up as a spirit?

Or a fully grown, really impressive human, like some Amazonian warrior woman princess, or a guy with his muscles, and a really great jawline, and like a super cool gravelly voice, like the voice of the dad in the movie, the voice of Patrick Swayze's dad in the movie Roadhouse from 1989.

[ 8 : 43 ] That was a very high context reference there. Sam Elliott, he's got such a great, he's got such a great, people are nodding, he's got such a great voice.

Why not come like that? Why not, why did he have to, why did, why not turn up to earth in a more impressive way? Why a baby? Or if, if God was really set on the baby idea, why not be born in a palace?

Or a mysterious cave, behind a waterfall? Something, something like inspiring, something like becoming of God. Why a baby in a, in a grimy barn?

Well, one reason is this, it's showing us the lengths that God will go to, to be known. The angels in verse 14, when they hear about baby Jesus, and they see where baby Jesus is being born, they shouted glory to God on high, which is, which is high praise.

And they were already, you can imagine, these angels, were already, pretty impressed by God. But they were astonished, at what God was doing here.

[ 9 : 53 ] The lengths, God went to, to be with us. The other reason, the main reason, I think that God became a real, human baby, born into this, born into indignity, and, a very humble situation, and lots of obscurity, was that this points us, to another great indignity, that would happen, about 30 years later.

A greater indignity, would happen, death on a cross. See the nature of Jesus' birth, is this little sign post, that points to the nature, of his death. God's rightful anger, at the selfishness, and all the evil in the world, poured out on his own son, and a humiliation on the cross, so it wouldn't be poured out on us.

Folks, God wants to know you. Look, at what he's willing to go through, to make that happen. That's the big story here.

God is good. You can trust him with your life. Look at what he has done for you. So that's the meaning of Christmas. I hope, it doesn't get too, crowded out, with all the other stuff.

Again, like I said at the start, if you're not super religious, and you want to hear more about this, you want a space to kind of, chat about it, we're running a discussion group, early next year, in January, it's called, Come and See.

[ 11 : 14 ] It'll run for three, consecutive Wednesday evenings, in January. Here's a little flyer here, you can bring all, your questions, all your ideas to that, we'll take them very seriously.

Grab one of these flyers, out the back on the table there, or go to the website. I think, I think this, if what I've said tonight is true, if this is true, it's probably worth spending some time, thinking about, isn't it?

And now, I want to invite, the Kennedy Carter family up, to come and pray for us.