

Nativity

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[0 : 00] Well, I think that each year the children seem to do it one more time and do it again one more time really, really well.

So a big thank you to you all. Shall we give all your teachers, leaders and helpers a big round of applause as well? Thank you. Right, I'm going to, you've told everyone the Christmas story and you told it brilliantly.

I'm just going to take a few minutes just before we close. We have a final song to sing together and of course tea and coffee afterwards.

But I want to take a few minutes with you just to address one thing really about Christmas or about any time of the year.

And that is making room. I've begun to realize that around about November I am faced with the same question that I'm faced with every single year.

[1 : 11] And it's this one. Do you still need that? Do you still want that? And it seems as though that the whole household goes through this process of before we get any more stuff, we're going to have to start throwing some stuff out.

Now I don't know about you, but I'm a bit of a hoarder. I'm a bit reluctant to throw anything away. And that seems to be, as I read the New Testament, it's a bit like that with Jesus.

That Jesus comes and is there going to be any room for him? And I think that one of the reasons why there's perhaps not a great deal of room for Jesus is because the rooms are full.

Our life is full. And the question that is coming to us from the New Testament is, do you really still need that? Do you really still want to keep that?

That's the probing question that you're faced with. And God answers very clearly in the whole of the Bible how it is people are able to get rid of the old.

[2 : 22] See, God's very clever. And he knows that the only reason people are really willing to give up that which is old is if they get something new.

Now this is often called, it's a fancy phrase, the expulsive power of a new affection, which basically means that the novelty of the old wears off when you fall in love with something new.

Now that's really important because that's exactly what Christmas is about. It's about God giving us something or rather someone brand new and his name is Jesus.

Now the trouble is when people don't want to throw stuff away, they want to hold on to both.

Sometimes in your house it can get extremely messy. Perhaps you've got a garage or a room that is so messy you have shut the door.

on for fear that you can't face to tidy it right now. I just can't face that. What God says is, is that as he looks into the hearts and minds of people's lives, is that you have rooms in your life that are exactly like that.

[3 : 37] It's full of all those things that you can't undo. And it's such a mess that you've just decided to shut the door on it. It's too much to face.

You just can't face it right now. And you put it off. You think, well, maybe I'll deal it with another year. But then you open the door and you recognize, actually, I can't sort certain things out in my life.

I can't seem to make room for anything. It's just, nothing is working. And what God says is that Jesus, to put it not irreverently, but to make it as simple and as clear as possible, that Jesus comes into your life to do house cleaning.

That he opens the doors that you shut to undo all those things that you can undo, to clear out all that mess that you've had to shut the door on because you don't know what to do with it.

And so what happens is that Jesus makes room for himself in your life by literally coming into it. When he gets in, it's a bit crowded, you could say, but then he begins to remove things, things that you actually want to be gone.

[4 : 51] It's called forgiveness. It's called grace. It's called mercy. It's called making someone new. It's called making someone whole. It's actually called making you exactly the way that you are meant to be.

That's what Jesus does. So if you look at Christianity, or if you look at a Christian, a believer, someone who follows Christ as though they go without.

Christians don't go without anything. Christianity is not about going without. Christianity is about having the one true gift that makes everything else in your life lose its luster.

They're beautiful. They're great. But in comparison to Jesus, it's the expulsive power of the new affection. That now we begin to realize just how much God loves us.

That that begins to diminish all of our lesser loves. We just don't seem to hold on to the previous things anymore. So when we're faced with the question all over again, do you want to keep that?

[6 : 00] The answer is no, I have Jesus. Do you want to keep that in your life? No, I don't need it because now I have God. See, God understands. God understands, to put it almost crudely, that the way you get over an old one is by having a new one.

And there's nothing like a new one to get you off, to get you over the old one. And that's what Jesus does.

He comes in recognizing that the only time you ever let go of anything is when you have something new and when you have something better. And that's what God has given us in Christ Jesus.

Someone new, someone better, something, someone that can never be beaten in any way. In desire, in want, in need, nothing.

And without that, you're constantly searching. You don't know what you want, but you know what you have. You don't know who you're meant to be, but you know what you are. But when you get Christ, all of those questions are answered.

[7 : 06] It's a struggle to live a Christian life, but it's a bigger struggle to live life with all those questions and all those things that you've just shut the door on. Because you can't do anything about.

No, no. Christ comes in and yes, he causes a little bit of disruption. Yes, he kind of makes the room untidy in order to get it tidy all over again. The gift of God in Christ Jesus is about making room in your life.

It's about getting rid of the stuff that you don't need. All the thoughts, all the feelings, all the things that you can't undo and that you've just had to shut the door on.

When God gifted his son to you, he knew that there could be no greater gift. He knew that there would be nothing better. And he knew that when you fall in love with his love for you, everything else diminishes.

Everything else loses its luster. Nothing else has the appeal like it used to. That's the expulsive power of a new affection. That the new affection casts out old and weaker and lesser affections.

[8 : 15] They just diminish and go. Because God knows, he's very, very clear on this, that we all find it extremely difficult to let anything go. And even the things that we want to be gone, we can't seem to get rid of.

So Christ is the one that does it for us. The only one who can do it for us. So how does it happen? Well, very simply.

That God gave you his son, and are you going to make room for him? That little bit of room that says, my house, my life is, I don't think it's got room for you, but I could certainly do with you in me. I could certainly do with you being with me and addressing me in those ways. And that's trust.

That's simply saying, do you know what?

I've looked everywhere else, I've tried everything else, and nothing's worked. And God's saying, well, I would do it all along for you. So the message of Jesus Christ, and the message of Christmas, is simply this.

[9 : 21] That God's almost come to you this morning and knocked on your door and says, do you have any room? Do you have any room?

So we'll know it's full. But then he says, I can make room. I can get rid of the things you're holding on to, but you don't need to be holding on to anymore.

I can actually undo the things. I said last year, if you were here, that many of you may not want Jesus to do anything for you. But I can absolutely guarantee there's a whole load of things that you would like him to undo for you.

That's what Jesus has come to do. That's the one we trust in. And when we trust in him, love for lesser things, though we can enjoy the world and we can enjoy much in it.

It's nothing. Absolutely nothing in comparison to having Jesus. That's what we trust in. That's who we trust in.

[10 : 23] And the message is this. You simply turn to him and say, I want you rather than what I have. I want that rather than the future I'm looking forward to.

I want you. I trust you. I trust what you say. And so I will turn to you this very day. Thank you for listening.

We're going to... Thank you.

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