



Dear Friends,

“God so loved the world...” (John 3:16)

How convinced are you that God loves you? What helps to convince you of God’s love?

It’s Christmas time again as I write this. Some people look forward to this season every year while others dread it. Like me, you have probably already watched a few mushy, sugary-sweet, Christmas movies, in which the moral at the end is about enjoying family and loving others and showing goodwill. (One of my favorites is *Muppet’s Christmas Carol*)

But is that really what Christmas is about? If it truly is only about family and loving others, then no wonder many without family or friends dread December. Sometimes I just want to yell: “But that’s only part of the story!!!”

I thought it might be a good idea if we clarify what we mean when we say that Jesus is what Christmas is all about. Let me give you an chronological outline that hopefully is easy to remember and pass on to others. You could even use it during your Christmas gatherings.

**1] God has created all of us in his image and with purpose – to bring him glory.**

*Isaiah 43:6-7 I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’ and to the south, ‘Do not hold them back.’ Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth—everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”*

**2] All of us rebel against God. Rebellion causes us to be separated from God. Separation from God is death.**

*Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*

*Col. 1:21 ...You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions.*

*Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death ...*

**3] God sent his Son, Jesus to die on behalf of all of us so we can be forgiven for our rebellion and be reunited with God.**

*Romans 5:6-11 When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners... But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation. For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.*

**4] In order for Jesus to die for us he had to become one of us, thus his birth of which we celebrate at Christmas.**

*Hebrews 2:14-15 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death*

**5] Jesus has to be personally accepted by FAITH in order to be granted God's forgiveness, to be reunited with God, and to be freed from the penalty of sin (justification).**

*Romans 3:22 ...righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe...*

**6] When we believe we are indwelt with the Holy Spirit who daily transforms us into the likeness of Jesus by freeing us from the power of sin (sanctification).**

*Galatians 5:16 So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves.*

**7] One day all who have faith in Jesus will be freed from the presence of sin (glorification).**

*Romans 8:21 For all of creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay.*

Simply put:

God created us for his glory.

We dishonored God by sinning and as a result became separated from God.

God sent Jesus to pay for our sins by dying in our place.

When we admit our sin and believe in Jesus, we are reunited with God.



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"Loving God, each other, and the world"

These are the FACTS of the GOSPEL. It is based on events which really happened and can never be undone. That is why we can be convinced that God loves us. Everything else can be taken away from us: our family, our health, our resources, our reputation, and even our abilities. But nothing can take away the fact that God demonstrated his love for us through his Son, Jesus.

What has been happening in your life to cause you to doubt God's love? I pray, I plead, I beseech you base your belief in God's love on the Gospel and not on your circumstances.

I pray that every time I see the baby in a manger this Christmas, I will become overwhelmed by God's love. And that all my difficulties will seem as nothing compared to what Jesus endured on my behalf.

*Blessings from Bev*

By the way, [What is the Gospel?](#), by Greg Gilbert and Carson D. A. Carson, is a great little book to read and share with friends.



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