

*** WELCOME HOME ***

Our Vision: *The Vision of Milan Christian Church is to strive every day to take the Gospel of Christ to those who need to hear it, to bring them into relationship with Christ through the waters of Christian Baptism, to teach them to become disciples of Christ, and equip and encourage all Christians to live their lives as Christ would live.*





What Does the Bible Say About Celebrating Christmas?

By Lenny William, from thebiblechristian.com



Have you ever wondered how to reconcile the joy of celebrating Christmas with biblical truth? The season stirs up feelings of hope, love, and peace, yet it can be clouded by questions about its origins and significance. Many grapple with the appropriateness of celebrating this holiday, especially in light of the clear guidance found in Scripture.

This article explores what the Bible says about celebrating Christmas, aiming to clarify its role and importance in the Christian faith. We will delve into Scripture, historical context, and practical implications, allowing biblical truth to guide our celebrations.

What Does The Bible Say About Celebrating Christmas? - The Bible does not specifically mention Christmas celebrations as we know them today; however, it emphasizes the incarnation of Christ and the importance of remembering His birth. Christians celebrate Christmas as a way to honor Jesus' entry into the world, marking the fulfillment of God's promise of salvation.

The Incarnation as the Core Celebration - The heart of Christmas lies in the miraculous birth of Jesus, which is central to Christian faith. The Gospel of Luke narrates the birth of Christ with profound simplicity and beauty in **Luke 2:10-11 (NIV)**: "But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.'"

This announcement brings joy, indicating that commemorating Jesus' birth is not merely cultural but a spiritual mandate for believers. Reflecting on the nativity encourages gratitude for the gift of salvation.

Historical Context of Christmas - Christmas, celebrated on December 25, emerged in the early centuries of the church as a response to pagan festivals. Church leaders sought to provide a Christian alternative that pointed to Christ. While traditions evolved, the core of Christmas remains focused on honoring Jesus.

By studying its origins, Christians can evaluate how traditions align with biblical teachings. Some aspects, like gift-giving, echo the gifts brought by the Magi (**Matthew 2:11**), while others may need thoughtful discernment.

Scripture's Guidance on Celebrations - The Bible encourages believers to celebrate with joy. For instance, in **Psalm 100:1-2 (NIV)**, it says, "Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs." Christmas presents an opportunity to bring joy into worship and honor God through celebration.

Likewise, **Colossians 3:23-24 (NIV)** reminds believers, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters." This speaks to integrating our celebrations with a sense of purpose and devotion to God.

The Importance of Intent in Celebrating - The intention behind our celebrations significantly impacts their spiritual value. Celebrating Christmas should focus on Jesus rather than materialism. Reflecting on this question: What do your Christmas traditions convey about your faith? Redirecting emphasis from consumerism to gratitude models Christ-like behavior.

Balancing Traditions With Faith - Christmas traditions are varied, reflecting different cultures and personal histories. There is no single biblical practice for celebrating the holiday, which allows flexibility in creating meaningful traditions. Key points to consider include:

- Incorporate Scripture reading, such as the nativity story, into family traditions.
- Emphasize service by helping those in need, reflecting Christ's love.
- Focus on prayer and worship to invite Christ into your Christmas observance.

Discernment in Celebratory Practices - Believers should practice discernment. Some elements of Christmas may reflect secular influences, like excessive spending or shifting focus away from Jesus. **Romans 14:5 (NIV)** urges, "One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind." Each believer must evaluate their reasons for celebrating and align them with their faith.

Cautions When Celebrating Christmas - While celebrating Christmas can glorify God, some cautions help navigate potential pitfalls. These include:

- Avoiding the distraction of commercialism, which can overshadow the true meaning of Christmas.
- Preventing family tension by respecting differing views on celebration.
- Recognizing the potential for idolatry in traditions that can replace the central focus on Jesus.

Engaging with Advent - Practicing Advent can enrich the Christmas experience. Advent refers to the four-week season leading to Christmas Day. It serves as a time of preparation, reflection, and anticipation for Christ's coming. Many families use an Advent calendar or devotional readings to guide them through this meaningful time.

This practice encourages mindfulness about Jesus' birth and His return, deepening believers' faith and focus during what can be a hectic season.

Creating a Christ-Centered Celebration - Being intentional helps steer Christmas celebrations back to Christ. Consider these steps:

- Set aside time for family discussions focused on the significance of Jesus' birth.
- Incorporate carols and hymns that celebrate Christ's incarnation.
- Leverage social gatherings to share the gospel and demonstrate love.

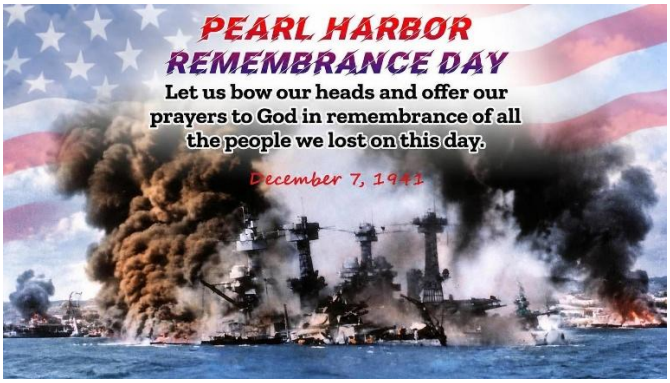
Christmas and the Great Commission - Celebrating Christmas presents opportunities to share the Gospel. Jesus commissioned His followers in **Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV)** to "go and make disciples of all nations." This mandate can extend to holiday gatherings.
Sharing the Gospel During the Holidays - Engaging with others about the meaning of Christmas creates avenues to share the good news of Jesus. Here are practical ways to incorporate gospel messages:

- Invite friends and neighbors to Christmas services or community events.
- Gift Christian books or resources that explain the nativity.
- Share personal testimonies that highlight God's work in your life.

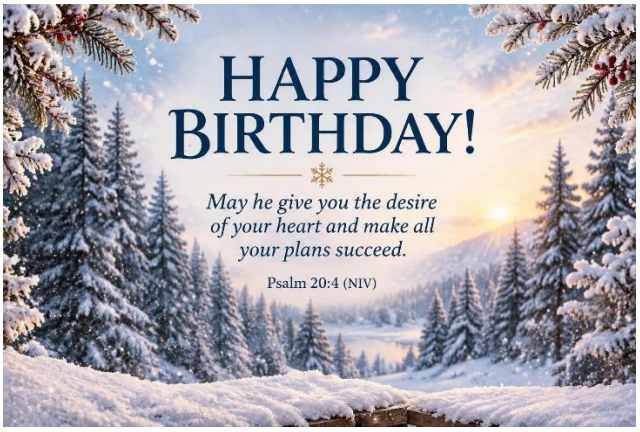
Reflecting God's Love Through Giving - Gift-giving can serve as a reminder of God's ultimate gift—His Son, Jesus. **Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV)** teaches, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God."

Let your giving reflect grace and love. This creates a culture of generosity that mirrors God's heart. Ask yourself: How can your gifts convey messages of love and grace this Christmas?

Conclusion: Embracing the Beauty of Christmas - This exploration of Christmas through a biblical lens reveals that celebrating the birth of Christ can anchor believers in faith. When done with intention and focus on Jesus, Christmas celebrations turn into joyful acts of worship. Embrace this opportunity to honor God, deepen relationships, and shine His light during the holiday season.



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS



12 – Devin Marquis & Laine Powell
19 – Tony Versluys
20 – Kelvin Hipkins
21 – Emily Kelley
26 – Sierra Slavish
27 – Carol Leingang
29 – Sofia Leone
31 – Phyllis Martens & Johnny Oeth











Prayer Requests



Phyllis Boley – Health issue
Anne Bosold – Recovery from shoulder surgery
Sue Huber Family (Passing of Sue) – Comfort
Rebecca Kline – Health issue
Heather Kisner – Health issue
Paul & Barb Lane – Health issues
David & Diana Lee – Health issues
Dennis & Phyllis Martens – Health issues
Kathie McAdams – Job issue
Amy Mitchell – Comfort (back pain)
Jim Mitchell – Torn ankle muscle
Scott Powell – Health issue
Britton Rexroat – Health issue
Gretchen Rexroat – Job issue
Carrie Roelf – Recovery from her bicycling accident injuries
Linda Thomas – Health issue
Linda Tipton – Health issue
Chris Uribe – Cancer
Julie (Johnny Oeth's mother) – Cancer
Di (Linda Tipton's sister) – Health issue
Kim (Linda Tipton's brother-in-law who cares for her handicapped sister) – Cancer
Heather (Sherry Powell's granddaughter/Scott Powell's daughter) - Cancer
Lacey (Sherry Powell's granddaughter) – Health issue
Alyse (Don & Cathy Jo Merritt's daughter-in-law) – Cancer
Francis (Kathie McAdams' sister) – Spiritual issue
Donald (Kathie McAdams' brother-in-law) – Recovery from surgery
Nicolette (Kathie McAdams' niece) – Health issue
Wendy (Pete & Norma Leone's niece) – Health issue
Sue (Angela Northcutt's sister) – Cancer
Michelle (Kirsten Litton's sister) – Continued recovery from serious injury
Mike (Brad Webster's brother) – Personal issue
Angie & Shawn (David & Diana Lee's daughters) – Health issue & Personal issue
Andi (David & Diana's granddaughter) - Cancer
John (David Lee's friend) – Health issue
Karen (Phyllis Boley's friend) – Health issue
Bonnie (Phyllis Boley's friend) – Injuries from a fall
Misty [NOT Misty from Coram Deo Church, Davenport] (Phyllis Boley's friend's daughter) - Cancer
Nate (Grandson of Jan Pugh's friend) – Cancer
Killian (Linda Hocker's son) – Recovery from hand surgery
Brian (Kristy Johnson's brother's father-in-law) – Health issue
Penny (Phyllis Martens' caregiver) – Health issue
Pat (Betty Kisner's sister) – Health issue
Jeff (Anne Bosold's 84-yr-old neighbor) – Health issue
Bob from B&M Buckle (Prints our weekly Study Guides/Connections & monthly newsletters) – Cancer
Alex (Jan Pugh's grandson) – Personal issue
DiAaron (Kathie McAdams' son) – Personal issue
Mark (Helen Howell's son) – Recovery from Airplane crash injuries
Marlin & Darcy (Friends of the Olivers, Sherry Powell & Jan Pugh) – Cancer/Comfort)
All our children dealing w/school or personal issues.
All who don't know Jesus or need to come back to Him.

When We Pray Together, We're Working Together



Newsletter – Jan Pugh, Email: transamram@msn.com

The Moment You Never Noticed In A Charlie Brown Christmas: Just Drop The Blanket

By Mel Johnson, from godtube.com







A Charlie brown Christmas debuted on national prime time television on December 9, 1965. after so many years, the beloved animated show is a classic and watching it has become a tradition for many families. There's one moment in this show that went seemingly unnoticed for all those years.

In a world where the latest greatest technology is outdated in a matter of months, and social media trends come and go in a matter of days, many years of anything becomes quite meaningful.

I am a fan of all things nostalgic and all things Christmas, and so when the two are combined I am hooked, and the Charlie Brown Christmas special falls squarely into that category.

A School Play - I was in the first grade back when they still performed Christmas pageants in schools (a very long time ago), and our class performed a version of the Charlie Brown Christmas. Since I was kind of a bookworm and already had a blue blanket, I was chosen to play the part of Linus. As Linus, I **memorized Luke 2:8-14**, and that scripture has been hidden in my heart ever since. But while working so diligently to learn those lines, there is one important thing I didn't notice then. And didn't notice until now.

Right in the middle of speaking, Linus drops the blanket.

Why It's Important - Charlie Brown is best known for his uniquely striped shirt, and Linus is most associated with his ever-present security blanket. Throughout the story of Peanuts, Lucy, Snoopy, Sally and others all work to no avail to separate Linus from his blanket. And even though his security blanket remains a major source of ridicule for the otherwise mature and thoughtful Linus, he simply refuses to give it up.

Until this moment. When he simply drops it.

In that climactic scene when Linus shares "what Christmas is all about," he drops his security blanket. And I am now convinced that this is intentional. Most telling is the specific moment he drops it: when he utters the words, "fear not."

Looking at it now, it is pretty clear what Charles Schultz was saying, and it's so simple it's brilliant.

Set Free - The birth of Jesus separates us from our fears.

The birth of Jesus frees us from the habits we are unable (or unwilling) to break ourselves.

The birth of Jesus allows us to simply drop the false security we have been grasping so tightly, and learn to trust and cling to Him instead.

Our world can be a scary place. And most of us find ourselves grasping to something temporal for security, whatever that thing may be. Essentially, this is a world in which it is very difficult for us to "fear not." But in the midst of fear and insecurity, this simple cartoon image from 1965 continues to live on as an inspiration for us to seek true peace and true security in the one place it has always been and can always still be found.

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DECEMBER

6 – GIVE-A-GIFT PROJECT, Gifts due at the church, See Jim Roggenbauer
7 – PEARL HARBOR REMEMBRANCE DAY
8 – ELDERBERRIES LUNCHEON, MCC basement, 11:30 AM; See Anne Bosold or Sherry Powell
8 – ELDER'S MEETING (closed), 5:30 PM
12 – GIVE-A-GIFT PROJECT PARTY & GIFT DELIVERY, QC Mission, See Jim Roggenbauer
19 – MEN'S BREAKFAST, Adventure Christian Church, Davenport, 7:30-9:30 AM, See Britton Rexroat
19 – LADIES' BRUNCH, MCC basement, 10-11:30 AM, See Amy Mitchell
24 – CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE, 5:30 PM
25 – CHRISTMAS DAY
31 – NEW YEARS EVE

WEEKLY CALENDAR:

TUESDAY (Not on Elderberries Tues.)—Small Group, MCC basement, 10 AM
WEDNESDAY—Small Group, Oliver home, 5:30 PM
—Small Group, Rexroat home – Dinner – 5:30 PM, Bible Study – 6 PM
—Worship Rehearsal, MCC, 6 PM
THURSDAY NIGHT WORSHIP SERVICE—Dinner 5:30 PM, Service 6:00 PM (Downstairs)
SUNDAY—In-Building Worship: 9:30 to 10:30 AM (Gluten Free Communion is available in the Coffee Room or ask a server, for assistance. Also, if anyone is in need of prayer & would like to pray w/someone, there will be individuals available at the front of the sanctuary after service.)
Church services are available to view on our website at www.MilanChristianChurch.com.
—Nursery: 9:30 AM (Main floor)
—Kids Church (Preschool-5th Grade): 9:30 AM (Downstairs)
—Student Ministry (6th-12th Grade): 9:30 AM, In the BOB (Building Out Back)