

## 'NEW LIFE HEALING CENTRE'

(The Bethel)

Torrington Street, East-The-Water  
Bideford EX39 4DP



Pastor Raymond Stacey

01237 472308

*Breaking into God's Plan  
& Purpose for your life*

**RELEASE** *from* **SLAVERY** *to* **FREEDOM**  
The Sacrifice of Christ Bondage New life/healing/Deliverance

### A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR RAYMOND

Today I would like to bring you a message of how the Christmas events that unfolded all those years ago, can and should, have an impact upon us today. All too often we hear about how Christmas has changed, that this season has become commercialised, and that it is all about partying and eating, very little left of the true purpose of Christmas.

Some years ago I was given a Christmas tree decoration which had these words printed on it - "**Jesus is the reason for the season**". You also, I expect, have heard this many times. So for us to fight against the temptation to lose sight of Christ during Christmas we have to make sure, at least in our personal life and in our family life, that Jesus remains the reason for the season. Put in another way, we need to keep Christ in Christmas and we can do this by focusing on the nativity rather than on society.

So, how does this statement hold true for us today 2021, and how valid is it? To put it simply without the birth of Jesus there would be no celebration of Christmas. Although we do not know the exact date of Jesus' birth, December 25<sup>th</sup> was settled on as the celebration day in the Roman Church by the fourth century A.D. Now here comes our first point. In the light of all this the date raises a few points. Some Christians refuse to celebrate Christmas purely on this point, it isn't the right day. But 'Christmas Day' is not the reason for the season, "Jesus is the reason for the season". Christmas is not about celebrating a particular day on the calendar, it is about celebrating the 'incarnation', the fact that '*The Word became flesh and dwelt among us*' - John 1 v 14.

Remember that for three years in the first century the people of Israel "*beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father; full of grace and truth*" - John 1 v 14. Albeit we cannot behold His glory in person today but we can celebrate His glory this Christmas when we celebrate His birth. For Christians, someone once wrote on "Christmas". They said - "For Christians believing that God came into the world in the form of man to atone for the sins of humanity, rather than knowing Jesus' exact birth date is considered to be the primary purpose (reason) in celebrating Christmas". So during this season, our reasons should and can be, Jesus incarnation, Jesus death for our sins, Jesus resurrection, Jesus reconciling us to the Father, and Jesus' promise of Eternal Life and of His coming again.

Jesus is the reason, not a day set aside on the calendar. So what about the 'season', what has this to say to us today, 2021. A season is a time characterised by certain traits or conditions. Four well known seasons which we have built into us about its traits or conditions are, Winter, Spring, Summer and Autumn. So what is the "Christmas Season". This includes December, it used to include the beginning of January, however, after November is more inclusive of the season and for many, sadly to say, it ends on the 27<sup>th</sup> December. What is now included in this season is breaks from work and school, special engagements (parties) and the giving of gifts and cards. Nothing really wrong in this but those things should not characterise the Christmas season.

For the Christian the Christmas season can and should be a time for renewal, reminders and reflections upon what Jesus did. So, what did He do that we can refresh our commitment to God? He left the glories of heaven being born in a stable, going on to live a perfect life on our behalf. Also it is a time for rejoicing within the Church for acts of generosity and service, and for sharing with others the true reason for Christmas.

So, as you focus your attention on Jesus, 1 Cor. 10 v 31, reminds us - "*Whatever you do – do all to the glory of God*". How can we do this at Christmas? Share the Saviour, when in giving (sharing) gifts/cards with neighbours, relatives, share something of Jesus. Also, share the hope. Christmas can be a hopeless time for many, more so with all that is happening in the world around us. As you keep your heart and mind focused on the '*sure and steadfast hope*' that is '*an anchor of the soul*' - Hebrews 6 v 19. You then can be a source of hope in this world to those around you, and Christmas is the most hopeful time of the year for those who know Jesus.

What else can we do? Business and the demands of the Christmas season can rob you of your peace, sometimes without even realising that it is gone, or because of traffic jams, buying gifts, last minute shopping, unannounced guests (maybe not), these things that make us busy, although should bring us contentment, can in-fact bring on conflict. Cont....

So remember that the Angels declared that the birth of Jesus heralded peace on earth – *Luke 2 v 14*. As the song says, "Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me". And finally, anyone who has Jesus, hope and peace in Him will surely project 'Joy', as the song states, '**Joy to the World**'. Reason? '**The Lord has come, Let every heart prepare Him room**'. So, have you prepared your heart this Christmas, and will make room for Him in your life? As Jesus gives you hope, peace, and joy, share this with others. They need it. In Jesus Name . . . AMEN.

*Have yourself a Very Happy Christmas by keeping Christ in your Christmas. I will be speaking with you all again for the New Year. NB There is No Service on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> December.*