

# Christmas?

by Chris Famisaran

Good morning, everybody. How'd you enjoy having Elder Wong come out last week? It was awesome. I'm very grateful and blessed to be family with awesome preachers. Let's go ahead and begin with prayer. Father, we thank you for another day of life. Lord, we've gathered together and as we begin a new month, Lord December noted for Christmas, Lord, may we look to your birth with hope and confidence in our salvation in Jesus name, Amen.

So its a little more crowded up here. I have a bunch of plants around me, can't run around like I used to. Okay. I was hoping to avoid using this but looks like I don't have a choice. I want to say thank you to the team who came out here last Saturday night to put this all Can we just give a big Amen as a thank you. All right. There was about nine individuals who came out here. So bless you. Thank you.

Now it's December 4, correct. So in December, was a famous day called Christmas that we have dedicated some time because it's an important holiday to us. It's important day. Maybe, you know, well we know that was Jesus born on actual Christmas day? No, it's more than likely probably born in the fall. But the idea of the fact that God can you imagine the God of the universe decides to give the comforts of heaven and come down here on Earth. That is grace, amen. Now, I was thinking about Christmas and a thought came up in my mind because Christmas tends to be very busy. And some people they really love Christmas. They really love celebrating Christmas. So question popped in my head the other day, how many of you are pre Thanksgiving? Let's listen to music. Let's put the everything up the tree and the lights everything pre Thanksgiving. If you want raise your left hand. Are you even comfortable and brave enough to do that? All right, okay, so Travis, Travis, you're the lone wolf out there. How many of you are post Thanksgiving okay, everything is okay. We can start listening to music. We can put up the decorations we can put up to the tree or whatever, anybody? Okay, we have a few more. How many of you just don't care? Okay, we have a couple. You know, I have some friends like, I don't care. I'll listen to Christmas music year round. Okay, bro. Okay. Um, I don't know, to me. I just I can't get into Christmas. before Thanksgiving. I mean courage to you. And you know, I just to me that I prefer just let me at least experience the holidays before we one holiday before we jump to the next one, right. But there's a lot of hustle and bustle with Christmas and I love this time of year. Don't get me wrong. It's my favorite time of the year. It's the most wonderful time of the year. Now, and one of the things that is surrounded by Christmas is the idea of gifts.

How many of you like getting gifts? Oh, come on. I know you all like getting gifts. Alright, getting gifts now. Now we're also supposed to say it's better to give than to receive right? But let's be honest, it's nice to receive something. Okay. Now I'm not saying no. Okay, I want everything. Christmas, what is Christmas about? And one of the things that maybe some of us like is we like to receive, you know, some kind of some random act of kindness, whatever. Well, there's a story I was I was Googling stories of, you know, best Christmas gifts ever. And there was this kid I don't remember his name. So let's just call him Adam. And Adam., you know, he and his brother, they were opening gifts. And his first brother, he picked the big box and when he opened up the box, there was a TV and a DVD player. Hey, guys, he's score big. Okay. Well, his brother Adam opens up a gift. And it's socks. Okay. Oh, cool. All right, I could use some socks, that his brother opens up another gift. Some DVDs show? Yes. Adam opens up another

box and it's filled with socks. And, you know, his brother keeps opening gifts. There was more DVDs and something else. So, you know, he did well for Christmas. Adam, on the other hand, he just kept opening Socks, socks, 18 pairs of socks. And by the time he got to the 18th pair he's like, what's going on, my brother has gotten a TV, a DVD player, some other things. And I got socks. The seams rigged so he gets up, he goes into the bathroom, and he's kind of sulking when it comes out. His mom is looking at him is everything. Okay? He's like, no, yeah. Are you sure? Why did my brother get a TV, a DVD player and some DVDs and I got socks. So she handed him another box. And as he was opening it, you got a really nice present. But it's really only one big present. We didn't want you to open up one thing because your brother, we spent about the same amount of money on you. But we wanted to get several things for him. And you got one really nice thing. And out of the box came a really nice laptop. So perspective. And afterwards, he felt ashamed and embarrassed that he had acted so horribly. And he said, Thank you, Mom, I really, really appreciate it. So that was a good story. How about this? Have any of you ever regretted giving a gift to somebody?

Okay, so I had to ask that. No, I have to say something about it, too. My wife's not here. So. But she'll agree with the end result of the story. So right after we got married. I don't know, this is the first couple of years that we were married. You know, one day we were sitting down. And she casually mentioned she would like to get an elliptical because I think it was during the winter time. And we didn't really have a good gym, and she didn't want to walk around the neighborhood, didn't quite feel super safe. She thought, Oh, if I could just have an elliptical. Well, I being the kind loving husband wants to fulfill the dreams for my wife and everything, saved up and bought an elliptical machine. Now the error was not the actual gift. My transgression was how I presented the gift. So I couldn't leave the elliptical at our apartment, because if she saw it, she would know what it was. So I hid it at my parents place. And the day before I went over, I wrapped the gift and then Christmas day we all came over, we were sitting around and opening gifts. And as towards the end, you know, I brought this gift from my wife. And I brought it in in front of my whole family. Ladies, you know where I'm headed in front of my mom, in front of my sisters. And she asked Oh, what's that? Oh, it's your gift. That's a big gift. Well, she opens it. And I could tell she's excited. But then I could tell something wasn't right. Now me I am totally I'm a guy. I'm oblivious. And I didn't know until about a week later as one of our friends was coming over. I really appreciate the fact that my husband bought me elliptical. But why did he have to present it in front of his whole family especially in front of his mom and his sisters and I just it what she was telling me she was feeling super, super insecure. So guys, don't buy your wife like a sports equipment and don't especially have them open in front of your family.

Gifts, gifts, gifts, gifts, you know, let's go ahead and go to the book of Isaiah. Today we're going to go through several passages Christmas. What is Christmas? Why should we celebrate Christmas? Should we celebrate Christmas? I'm not going to be able to share everything that I did. So part of what I wanted to do was kind of rehash of a sermon that I did back in 2019. It's called the urban legends of Christmas. If you want to get a better perspective of part of what I wanted to say go back. It's the last sermon in December of 2019. Okay, but today we're going to talk a little bit about Christmas and we're going to look at back on several passages from the Old Testament that actually kind of gives us a bit of a heads

up that the Messiah was going to come down to earth. So let's go to Isaiah chapter nine, verse six, Isaiah chapter nine, verse six

It was already foretold it was prophesied that our Messiah coming out some of these. Bill actually kind of hit on earlier when we did our Matthew series but in Isaiah nine, verse six, are we all there? Okay? I hear a few pages turning. It says For to us a child is born... who's the child? Jesus, to us a son is given and the government will be on his shoulders and he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. Okay, that's one verse. Let's hop over. Let's go back to let's go a chapter to two chapters back to Isaiah 7:14. Isaiah 7:14. And it says here, Therefore the Lord himself will give you what a sign, The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and we'll call him What? What does he manual mean? God with us. So there's a promise that God would be with us. And in God's mind, that's literally to be with God's people. Many years later, we find in Matthew one, verses 18 to 23. It says, This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about his mother was pledged to be married to Joseph. But before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph, her husband was faithful to the law. And yet he didn't want to expose her to being pumped to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. You imagine your fiancé comes and says, I'm pregnant. But yeah, you know, nothing's been happening. And you wonder, wait a minute. And then she says, But God did it. And you're thinking whaaaaaaattttttt? And so he's trying to be an honorable man. I mean, he if he was really if you really wanted to, if he's really vindictive, he could have just told everybody, what would have happened to Mary? She probably would have been stoned to death. I'm glad we progressed over the years. We're not as... we don't react such so violently yet. You know, David, I'm sorry. I'm not David, Joseph. He's trying to do the right thing in his own mind. But after you consider this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife. because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit takes an angel to affirm him. She will give birth to a son of year to give him the name Jesus because he will save his people from their sins. And all this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said about through the prophet The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him what, Immanuel. Which means God with us. Two verses easily that we could read that point directly to Jesus birth. There's several, there's many other verses that we could go to. But just real quickly, there's, you know, Genesis 3:15, after Adam and Eve, then God reminds him that there is a plan to handle what has happened even though they didn't have the fruit. There's also Hosea 11:1 and Micah 5:2. But these are just examples. Okay, so I wrote these so that you can go back but let's just kind of focus on Isaiah 9:6, For to us a child is born to us a son is given and the government will be on his shoulders, he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. When I look at these four attributes, I think of them as gifts. Imagine the fact that we have a God who is a wonderful counselor who gives good wisdom. Amen. When we look at the life of Jesus, did Jesus ever give good wisdom? Okay, so what are some things that Jesus said that is really good practical advice? Don't worry. Okay, Fear not. I love this one. Let the let the first one among you who is without sin? Be the first the cast a stone. Remember that. Okay? Don't be a hypocrite guys. All right, how about a new command I give you Love one another as I have loved you. So you must what? Love one another. How about I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again, I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Or one of my favorites. Whoever will wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave of everyone else, For even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to say serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Finally, the other one, I think it's in Matthew 6, where he says, hey, you know, before you try to tell people what to do, and give your perspective, make sure you know, you actually got your affairs in order, because otherwise it's like a log sticking out of your eye. Amen. So God gives us wonderful wisdom. To me, I think that's a gift. And, you know, when we're talking about the fact that this son, Jesus, the Messiah came into the world, he not only shares great wisdom that we can find in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. But he comes also, to say that which was lost. We also have a mighty God. And when I think of a mighty God, I don't think of a small God, I think of a great God, the God of the universe. To me, you know, I was watching a video on YouTube and talking about the expanse of the universe. And I know like the universe is huge, right? But the way that they were able to show and realize, I thought the universe was big, it just it was my mind was blown again. And yet the same God who created us also controls that whole universe. That's a big God. And that gives me confidence that I'm not dealing with a small God, but I'm dealing with a capable, big God, we have and serve a mighty God, that's another gift. There's also the gift of the Everlasting Father. And when I, I take hold on, not only everlasting, what is everlasting? It's eternal, for ever. So it's we're not dealing with just a small guy, we're dealing with the big guy, we're dealing with the wise God, but we are also dealing with a God who is eternal, who is everlasting, whose love is everlasting. That's another beautiful gift. And the last one is that of peace. Jesus brings peace. I think for many of us, would it be fair, we desire peace? Can we just have peace? Not only around the world, but also internally. I think we've experienced a lot of conflict recently, the last couple of years. We just like to have a little bit of peace for once.

You know, listen to Norma. She recounts a time where she was out in the mall. And it must have been right before Christmas because there was a special going on at the mall. And for I don't know if it was like 10 minutes or an hour. You could get an extra 10% off any item. And so she saw a tablecloth, I think it was a tablecloth. And yeah, it was a lace tablecloth. And she went and just as she put her hand on it, there was another woman who put her hand on it. And they locked eyes. And they knew one of us was going to take that tablecloth and the other table the other lady said "mine" and grabbed it out of her hands. Oh, it's kind of rude. Well as the day went on, it kept getting worse and worse and worse. And by about four o'clock she had agreed to meet up with some of her friends for some tea and some an early dinner. When they sat down the waiter came by and she said I need hot tea now. And the waiter said, I'm not your waiter. Well, so please wait your turn. And responded I've been waiting my turn all day. Ever have one of those days where you just feel like you just can't win and you've been your patience is just lost by about four clock? The waiter just ignored her. Well, a few moons later, a young man named Robin comes in and says, I'm your waiter. And as Robin took the order, listen to watch Robin as he helped with the other rude waiter, and amongst the other customers, and he just had this aura of calmness of peace and dealing with technical people before Christmas. And as he came and delivered the tea as he gave, delivered the order, he noticed that he was wearing something on his hand that said the word Jesus and all of a sudden she realized, okay, I need to take a step back. Because when she thinks about Jesus, what did she think of Jesus, calmness, peace, and realize she'd been acting really difficult, unnecessarily. And for the rest of the day, she managed to open doors for other people, she managed to let people go ahead of her in line. All because someone came in and was a representative of Jesus just doing their job reminding and bringing peace into this world. One of the questions that we have to ask ourselves is, or sorry, not sorry, I'm getting ahead of myself. But Jesus brings salvation, Jesus brings salvation.

The another passage that we could look up to you, I didn't have time to put it in, because I thought I thought of it after but Galatians 4:4-7, Paul writes back now this has been before we talking about before Jesus came into this world, we're going to talk posts, after Jesus had left the world, Paul reminds the Galatians. And he says, But when the time and set had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a women born under the law, to what? anybody know, redeemed. Thank you, redeem those under the law that we might receive what? adoption to sonship, because you are his sons, and God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out Abba, which is father, so you are no longer a slave but God's child and since you are His child, God made you what an air and what's one of the benefits of being an heir, inheritance. And as God's sons and daughters what is our inheritance? Eternal life. I love this passage. Yet so many times during this Christmas season, I think sometimes we experienced what Lucinda experiences. After before she came to a realization. We experienced stress, hustle and bustle. I know for a lot of our moms out there when they're trying to make sure that all the kids get their presence. Or maybe if it's their time this year to host what do they have to do they want to make sure dinner is awesome. They got to get the house taken care of. Gustavo, I saw you looking at her. Right? Those of you who just experienced hosting Thanksgiving, oh, what a relief it was after was all done Amen.

And now go round to Christmas. And Christmas culturally has become this thing where we're more concerned about saving 10%, 20%, 35%, Maybe if a business is going out of business, you're gonna get an even better discount. We want those sales, and then we're hustling and bustling. We got Christmas programs, we got to continue going on. By the way journey to Bethlehem went last night. It was awesome. Don't miss out. But Christmas, rather than actually remembering the whole purpose of it. We're so consumed by everything that's going on around us that we actually forget the reason for this season. I know it's a cliché, but it's true. When we think about Christmas, we're so caught up in making sure everything is going to plan and we don't take time to think about what God has done. So in this chaos, remember that Jesus brings peace. Jesus brings peace. Take time, take time every day to spend time with God. Do it earlier the better because you should have peace before you start the day. Amen. Especially during this time. How can we best honor remember Jesus birth by reflecting on it, thinking back really seriously, it just blows my mind that God would come into this earth. Why would anybody want to come here when it's so broken and messed up? But our God did? Has any other God decided to leave the comforts to come to hear? Only Jesus. That's how much Jesus loves us. So how can we best honor and remember, reflect Jesus? Remember what Jesus has done? Not only so I mean, we're not going to die for other people. But how did Jesus treat other people? With love with kindness? Let's give some practical examples. Practically, how did Jesus love others? He what? He fed them, right? There's a lot of hungry people. He forgave them. What did you say, Bill? He healed them. He spent time with them. He listened to them. He validated their experience. Let's be honest, how many of us are sitting here wondering if we're making a difference? Or if we're even feeling worthy, or questioning? Should I continue to go on? Is it worth it? How many of us during this time we're feeling lonely. I want to encourage you, this can be one of the best times but it can also be one of the loneliest times. Because some of us have maybe lost a loved one since last year, or it's been a couple of years. It could be 50 years. And we love that person. And they're no longer here with us. One thing that we can do is we can honor that by living like Jesus did reach out to that person doesn't cost anything to make a phone call to write a letter, or maybe invite them over for a cup of tea. Right? Be like Jesus, he met people's needs. He listened he validated their existence. Christmas should be a time of reflection. Travis talked about that earlier, too. He finally remembered, Hey, man, I've been taking this whole refrigerator for granted all

this time. It says little things. But let's reflect and see what Jesus has done. And how can we take those lessons and be a blessing to others?

What is a reflection? Something that it forces you know, so if you're out on a pond, and you look down and you look, you'll see your reflection, you'll see your face look in the mirror. And sometimes, you know, one of the most uncomfortable things we can do is we can reflect on ourselves who've been doing some journaling recently, and taking honest notes. Oh, I've made progress. Don't get me wrong. But the fact is, I got a lot more to work on, on this journey that I'm on right. Take time to reflect your life. Your values your family, reflect on your relationship with God, and how can I better improve my relationship with God?

That's one of the things we don't like to do, because we just we prefer to ignore those kinds of hard questions. But I'll tell you what, when you face on your fears, when you face your fears directly and you don't wait, and you're able to deal with those things, progress comes at much faster. Amen. So may it be a time of reflection, may the Christmas time be a reminder that Jesus priority was to save and to serve, to save and to serve? I think of Zacchaeus. Right? He'd been living a lie to himself his whole life. And yet when you realize as Jesus' column comes along the way he realizes that he wants everything that Jesus has any literally changes his life. In Jesus perspective. This guy gets it to serve and to save. Jesus loves us.

So question or not a question in your notes on the back. Okay. At the very bottom are some discussion questions. We don't want you to just come here, sit and listen and then leave and then just That's it. We want to have something practical for you. So this is a challenge, especially for me is to give you an opportunity to continue this discussion. So maybe after you're done here in the parking lot, or maybe call somebody later this week or even today, find somebody you don't know very well, and just ask these two questions. Okay reflecting us. What are you thankful for, that God has done for your life, either today, in the past in the last year or just any time in your life, okay? And secondly, if we follow Jesus as our example, what is one act of service that we can implement today to either serve our family, or fellow neighbor? So, we're trying to make this real. Reflect on during this month of December, of Jesus birth of Jesus life? And also, how can we practically help serve one another? And I just pray that well, yes, Christmas tends to get busy. Remind that remind, remember that Jesus brings peace, take time, spend time with God, may you find peace, may you find wisdom, take confidence that we have, and serve a mighty God who is everlasting. May God bless you lead and guide you this month.

Father in heaven, thank you for life. Thank you for love, thankful, thank you for who you are that large, you came into this earth as a baby relying on Mary and Joseph, to care for you. And yet as you grew, Lord, you learned you grew in wisdom. You shared love you shared wisdom you taught you healed, you left a legacy for us to be able to emulate and more than anything, Lord saved us from ourselves. May we never forget your great sacrifice, Lord, may we give you praise and honor every day? And above all, Lord, may You be glorified. In Jesus name. Amen.

Grace and peace, everybody. Have a great week and don't take off quite yet.