

I'll Be Home For Christmas

Home for Christmas series

by Chris Famisaran

Good morning, everyone. I'm not gonna lie. I felt a little cutting it close there. I wasn't sure I would get time between the baptism and now. Today is a wonderful day. I hope. I am grateful that you are all here.

Y'all have a good Thanksgiving? Some of you, I'm sure, are going to be traveling back home. Those of you joining us for the first time here or maybe online, did you know that between Thanksgiving and Christmas, almost 120,000. Sorry, 120 million people will be traveling from home to home roughly tomorrow. Even within the last couple of days, over 81 million people will probably be traveling. About 73 million people, 70% by car, 6 million by air. And then, of course, you have the bus, train. And I did not know cruises have gone up during Thanksgiving. But even between Christmas and New Year's, there's almost 119 million people who will be traveling. 107 million. 90% again by car, almost 8 by air.

Travel, travel, travel, travel, journey. How many of you love to travel? Some of you hate traveling? How many of you are a really good car driver when you're traveling, a good car person? I'm not going to answer that. Travel, you know, travel. This idea, I think, you know, when it comes to the holidays, what comes to mind for me, a lot of it is nostalgia because I look back on the times of especially Thanksgiving and Christmas, I can't decide which one is my favorite. I love Thanksgiving because of the food, but also as a kid, I love Christmas because I love presents, right? So I'm going to be honest. But as I've gotten older, both have different meanings. They've taken on different themes. You know, my wife decorated our house for Christmas yesterday. I was so excited. I was tired.

We put, by the way, thank you to the team who also put all the decorations and everything up. Celine, Alberto, Bill, Ashley, Alex, Ben, Andre, Irene, Sergio. If I'm missing anybody, I really apologize. My brain's scrambling right now, but thank you. Let's give them a hand for putting the church together. And I know Celine's also asking if you want ideas for next year's Christmas, come see them. Let them know, you know, we don't want it to be just one person dictating. We want to. If you have any ideas or any suggestions. We're not going to. We're not going to. We can't necessarily promise we'll do it, but any suggestions?

But I think of Christmas as a time of nostalgia. Getting together, Thanksgiving, there's often a lot of sentiment to that. I'm sure some of you have heard the song. *I'll be home for Christmas you can plan on me Please have snow and mistletoe and presents on the tree Christmas Eve will find me where the love light gleams I'll be home for Christmas if only in my dreams I'll be home for Christmas you can plan on me Please have snow*

and mistletoe and presents on the tree Christmas Eve I'll find me where the love light gleams I'll be home for Christmas if only in my dreams.

The idea of Christmas, I think in this song, is that of being together with one's loved ones. Amen. Not just Christmas, but also Thanksgiving. We gather together maybe because, well, it's the thing that we do, but there is this kinship, this, you know, to be together at least once, if not twice a year with those who are most important to you. You know, I think of the holidays headed home for Christmas because it brings joy and anticipation, excitement. We look forward to maybe decorating, celebrating, and all the fun stuff. But there's also a sense of warmth and of love, like a warm hug that these times may bring. Being able to spend times with those you love brings closeness. And also, maybe especially with Christmas, there's a sense of generosity. But we also hope for peace. A time where there's also even spiritual significance, because ultimately, Jesus came down onto this earth to begin the mission to save and redeem us. Oftentimes, though, the idea of being home for Christmas could also bring up stress and anxiety, maybe for those who are the planners, those who go shop, or even the financial pressure there. Also, for some of us as well, it might be the first time of being celebrating Christmas or the holidays by yourself or without a loved one. There may be grief tied to this, and even too, it's already started the commercial fatigue of commercials. Everybody, you need to do this. You need to buy that.

You know, we're gonna get into these verses. So for those of you who are joining us online, there's a link to a handout in the description, so go ahead and we'll look at cover these verses.

Love is the foundation of a home. Okay. Love is the foundation of a home. I want to go to Genesis chapter, chapter one, please. Genesis, chapter one. And I'd like to read verses 26 through 28. Genesis 1:26 through 28 says, *Then God said, let us make mankind in our image and our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals and over the creatures that move along the ground. So God created mankind in his own image and in the image of God, he created them, male and female. He created them. God blessed them and said to them, be fruitful and increase in number. Fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, and over every living creature that moves on the ground.*

So we see the first example of a family. God created the heavens, the earth, and seen everything in them, and then created Adam and Eve. In a sense, the first family. What does family provide? You know, I think family number one, it provides support. Go through a hard time. Your family hopefully is there to support you. But family also provides identity, a place of where you belong. I hope and pray. Unfortunately, not all families are perfect. And next week we're going to talk about difficult families. Even Jesus had challenges with his own family. But family helps to bring a sense of identity. The name that's attached to you, okay? You can choose to live with that name, or you can choose to change it if you so desire. A family can bring identity and who you belong to. Family, there is a good foundation, will also help you set up for life, teach you and to

develop life skills. Families, parents are there to help, to teach, and to guide you through life. And it doesn't just stop when you're 18. The relationship may change a little bit to adapt. But, you know, parents, you know, you never stop being parents, Right? **A home is not just physical. It's also emotional and spiritual.** What does home mean to you?

Let's go to Luke, chapter two. Luke, chapter two. Here's another journey that I want to talk about. Luke, chapter two, starting at verse one through eight. All right, y' all there. Okay. *In those days, Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. This was the first census that took place while under Quirinius, who was governor of Syria. And everyone went to their town to register. So everybody had to all go back to home to show, to be counted. Okay. Cause Caesar wanted to know how many people were under his rule, under his dominion. So verse 4. So Joseph also went up from the town of Galilee, of Nazareth in Galilee, to Judea, to Bethlehem, the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. And while they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.*

Imagine being Mary and Joseph. Mary carrying a child. What a journey. It was not a quick trip. It took some time. Oftentimes we think of Mary riding on, what, a donkey. Right. Doesn't say that, though. So, to be pregnant moms, how do you feel about walking roughly 70 to 100 miles without hiking boots, without good shoes, maybe sandals? We don't know exactly. I just know that it would have been uncomfortable. And we see this family that goes. And when they get there, is there a room available? No, no. They end up staying with the animals. Quite a humble entrance for the God of the universe to come into this world. Their first time together as a family is not some palatial design. Even though Jesus is the king of the world. It wasn't a royal time. It was a simple time. Joseph being a carpenter was not a. Well, a wealthy. A wealthy individual. But here they were together. And later they will be joined by shepherds who were there to help provide security, but also to go out and share with the world that the Savior has come to announce that Jesus, the Messiah has been born. What kind of home are we building? When we look to going back to Genesis, we see that, you know, you have the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and yet God says, let us make. Let us make man in our image. So you have God, Adam, Eve, and of course, then you add on, by extension, their children and so forth.

There's a study done by Gillsjo and Schwartz-Barcott (2011) where it involved senior citizens who said that their idea of home had to do with their childhood. As they reflected back on the community that they have and the places of worship, the researchers concluded that there was no established definition of home, but rather it is a place where people feel attached, comfortable, and secure. So a home is not just physical. It's also emotional and spiritual. So how do you want to build your home? What is your home built on? Is it built on **love and respect**? Do you care for and love and respect one another? Do you have **healthy communication**? Are you able to have

the hard conversations that you're scared of? The only way to move forward together is to have them to listen. Is your home a place of **warmth, or comfort**? Are you a person of warmth and comfort, or are you wanting to just keep everybody at a distance? Does your home feel **safe and secure**? When people come, do they feel warmth, or do they feel like they're on Eggshells or pins and needles? Is there joy and laughter in your home? Do you like to have fun? One of the ways to have warmth and comfort and feeling safe is also being able to have **joy and laughter**. And are you an **encourager**?

Now, all of these things apply not just to a physical home, but you as a person. Do you show love and respect? Are you somebody who can communicate with others well? Do you provide warmth and comfort? Are you a safe and secure person? Are you a person that people can feel safe and secure being with? Do you bring joy and laughter? And lastly, are you an encourager? These are just some of the things that you can do, but also, are you a hospitable person? Do you share gratitude? Are you thankful for what you have?

You know, years ago, probably about nine or 10 years ago, as you know, I love to ride my bike. And there was a club putting on a Christmas tree light. No, a Christmas light tour of a town that I lived next to at the time. So, hey, I was looking for friends. So I got on my bike and I rode over and we rode around this town. And I knew one individual in the club, but when I got there, nobody really said hi. Nobody really said welcome, even though they invited the community to join them and it was cool. They built their bikes up, they put lights on, you know, to be very reflective. You could not miss us as a group, but when we got done with the ride, I felt a little disheartened, like I knew my friend, but even then, didn't really get to introduce me to anybody. And it felt very. Just awkward, and I felt very unwelcome. Do you ever experience that? How many of you experience going to church? Do they welcome? Are they welcoming? Are they inviting? How many of you have ever been to a cold church? I've been to a number of churches. I'm not gonna lie. I judge churches by when I welcomed. As a pastor, I want to know, like, are you welcoming? Are you inviting? How many of you got greeted today? All right. How many of you got a hug, right? So as a person, do people feel safe and secure? Do you provide a sense of home with the people that you come into contact with? As we journey together over the next couple of weeks, it's our desire that you not only seek to go home to be with those that you love, but to be a home to those who don't have one, who don't feel at home, or perhaps maybe there is conflict in that home and it's the last place they want to be. . We're going to talk about how Jesus the Savior made it possible for us to have an eternal home by coming to this earth. Amen.

So, home for Christmas. I'll be home for Christmas. Father in Heaven, thank you. As we journey, oh as we journey together, lead and guide us in all that we do. Help us to be faithful in Jesus name. Amen.

Quick Reflections, reflections for you all. **What type of home do you want to build and what would you like that home to look like?** What type of home do you want to build and what would that look like?

Lastly, brainstorm. Okay, we went over a handful of suggestions. They aren't the only suggestions, but **write down three ingredients of how you want to build or incorporate that you will build and incorporate into your life to ensure someone they know they are welcomed and loved.**