



## CrossRoads Notes:

Turn Your Bibles to Luke 2:1-7

*Title: Christmas Love*

*Theme: The Love of God, Christ Given*

*Series: The Cast of Christmas*

Read Luke 2:1-7

**Introduction:** *There is so much that comes at us especially this time of the year. Before we know it Christmas day is here and it seems that we just did not get prepared to celebrate it as we had hoped. The world's way of celebrating Christmas sometimes has a way of keeping us from enjoying the Lord Jesus' birthday in spirit and truth. One of the best ways to grasp Christmas joy is to consider the lives of those who are closely connected with the physical birth of Christ.*

**Proposition:** I would propose to you if you want to grasp true joy during the Christmas season it is imperative that you catch the significance in how God showed love by giving Christ. God gave His Son and Christ came willingly—true expressions of sacrificial love.

**Interrogative Sentence:** *Just what is the significance in how God and Christ showed their love to us? John 3:16 says, "God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. The Greek word for "believes" (*pisteuo*) means to put complete trust in, to have no doubt about or to be certain of. The application of this word as applied in John 3:16 is to have such a belief in Jesus Christ that how He lived and what He taught has a continued effect on how you live. (Practical Word Studies in the New Testament; The Complete Word Study of the New Testament; Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains; The Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament)*

**Transitional Sentence:** *The first truth that the Holy Spirit wants you to grasp from the written Word of God is the conditions into which God sent His Son, Jesus.*

Jesus' birth was the fulfillment of much Biblical prophecy, one incidence being what was spoken by Jacob. (Genesis 49:10)

Jacob foresees and foretells. When he is dying God gives Jacob a look into the future and he gives support from his deathbed that not only is a blessing to his sons, but to all who become sons of God through adoption by faith in Jesus Christ.

When Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem Israel was once again in need of a sign that the Great Deliverer, the child to be born according to what is written about Him had arrived.

The Temple was no longer cared for by ministers of God who could grasp the will of God, rather servants who were governed by fear of Roman oppressors.

According to Who' Who in the Bible, Esau, represented that heart that is not serious about its relationship with God. He made frivolous decisions that had irreversible consequences. When Esau understood that it would be displeasing to his parents to marry girls from certain family lines he deliberately went off and found a girl that his parents would not like and added her to his wives. (Genesis 28:6-9) In Hebrews 12:16 we read that he was a godless man and the Bible says that Esau lived a purposely rebellious life and there was no place in his heart for repentance. (Hebrews 12:17)

The truth that the Holy Spirit wants you to grasp in this portion of the message is that mankind left to himself will do whatever it takes to remain on the throne of his own heart. What is scary about that is this heart that is clearly against Christ being truly Lord and Savior makes the human mind think it is doing right, when in truth it is acting in full rebellion. This heart brings justification in its actions while it makes frivolous decisions and produces irreversible consequences. Only Jesus Christ can turn a heart around that is set against God, only He can intervene and put a stop to irreversible consequences of rebellion.

The great news is that in the middle of a sin sick world at the time of Jesus' birth there were people who sought God and were looking for the coming of the Messiah. God made sure that those seeking Him were made aware that the Savior of the world had arrived. Not only did the Lord make it known, He used those who responded to the good news to tell others. (Luke 2:8-19)

Law suits are brought against those who want to publicly express their faith in Christ during the Christmas season. Instead of "Merry Christmas" those in this world are wanting have people say "Happy Holiday." Christians in public service are more and more attacked by the media when they express their faith in Christ and prayer. Even in the church the purity of the pulpit is threatened by those who serve in it and the church is embracing that which breaks the heart of God. In the midst of this offense, God still sends the Holy Spirit of Christ to those who love Him so they can have fellowship with the Lord.

**Transitional Sentence:** *God has always and still does express His love to people in this sin trodden world and the sending of His one and only Son is expression of true love.* (1 John 4:9-12) Jesus being born in Bethlehem is the Shiloh who was to come. "Shiloh" (siyloh) means "the peaceful one." (The Complete Word Study; Trough the Bible)

In Christ there is reconciliation between God and those who truly have Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. This peace comes to us not because we showed love to God, but because God loved us first. This is a truth that must be grasped this Christmas season if we are going to walk in a joyous Christmas spirit.

1 John 2:2 in the New American Standard Bible tells that Jesus "...is the propitiation of our sins, and not just ours, but also for those of the whole world." Propitiation is something God does to make it possible for men to be forgiven. God did not give us His Son because we were attractive, or because we were good or because we make promises to do things for Him. He does not give us eternal life because He can gain something from us.

Anyone who has ever had children knows that sometimes an expression of love is what is needed even when the feeling of love is not present. Children at times make poor decisions when they are engaging in sin that hurt themselves, others, and the God who created them. These sins grieve the heart of a parent. It is at this time that the child needs to be shown an expression of love even though the feeling of love is not present. This expression can come as parents trust in Christ who paid the price for those sins.

Christians slip into sins that grieve the heart of the Lord and yet while that act of sin is bringing about its consequences, Christ will make sure that we enjoy His love as we turn to Him for forgiveness and direction.

**Transitional Sentence:** *God's love is available to Christians only because God is love. He has shown that love by giving us His one and only son.* The last truth to grasp in this message is the unusual place where the King of the Jews was born and the significance that has to us. (Luke 2:6-7)

The irony of the most important event in history taking place in a stable should not be lost. There are some significances worth noting because it reveals how God resides in the lowliest of hearts and rejects the proud and mighty things of this world.

Being the King of the Jews, Jesus was worthy of being born in a palace with the best that could be offered in His day for the delivery of a baby. Being the last and final High Priest, the priests who were only about six miles away in Jerusalem surely could have found at least one home in Bethlehem that would open their doors for Mary to give birth to God's Messiah. If someone rich or influential had been supporting Mary and Joseph a place would have been made for them.

Christ lowered Himself to be born a man, taking on human flesh and by age 33 taking on the sins of the world. He showed His humility by being born in a lowly stable. Symbolically, a stable can be a representation of a place of sin. Sin is an unpleasing aroma to God and all stables have an unpleasant aroma. The Savior of the world was

born into a place of uncleanness so He can someday make a way for those under the curse of sin to be made clean by accepting Him as personal Savior and Lord.

Just as Christ was born in a stinky stable, the Holy Spirit of Christ is born in the man or woman who, in repentance, turns to Christ for forgiveness. The heart of man is often chasing after self-will and the things of this world as he amazingly listens to the lies of the devil. All this is an unpleasing aroma to the Lord, The Lord, however, remains within the heart of the believer to do His spiritual work. The love of God is expressed as He sends the Holy Spirit of Christ into the spiritual heart of Christians.

In Romans 8:9 the Holy Spirit is referred to as the Spirit of Christ. In John 14:17 and He is called the “Spirit of truth.” The Bible says Christians will know Him and that He lives in them. (John 14:17) God’s amazing love is always demonstrated by action. It is never complacent but continually working in Christians. The Spirit of Christ dwelling within the spiritual heart of Christians cleans them up and makes new people out of them. Romans 8:9-11 says, “You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the [Holy] Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ... And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit, who lives in you.”

The true mark of a born-again believer and a genuine Christian is that he has the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The child of God who knows the love of God, sent into their lives by Christ says as the Apostle Paul, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

**In Closing:** *There are three truths in today’s message that must be grasped if you are going to walk in Christmas joy.* 1.) Just as Christ was born in conditions that were hostile to the work of God, Christ can be revealed in the spiritual heart that wants to rebel against God. 2.) God sending Christ into the sin trodden world and Jesus being revealed to you are expressions of God’s love. 3.) To respond to God’s love means to have accepted Christ as personal Savior and Lord and to have the Holy Spirit of Christ indwelling you.

This Christmas season the Holy Spirit calls your attention to the exhortation of the Apostle Paul, “Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you--unless, of course, you fail the test? (2 Corinthians 13:5) The true believer who has accepted God’s love, Christ given, is a new creation. Do you love the Lord Jesus? Do you serve Him? Are the things of the Lord constantly on your mind and heart? These three truths must be settled in your mind and heart before you partake in communion this Christmas Eve day.