



*why* CHRISTMAS?

## LUKE 2:1-14

WHY CELEBRATE?

DECEMBER 24, 2023

### SERMON SUMMARY

Pastor Jeff finished our Advent sermon series with a final question, “Why Celebrate?”

He summarized that often, our Christmas celebration could be shallow and weakened by our idealized and sentimentalized view of life.

He used the variety of Christmas cards as a way to represent our perspectives:

**Winter Wonderland Cards:** These cards can represent our inability to view the world as it is: cold, dark, and lonely. Winter is not a wonderland if you do not have the warmth and safety of home; it is cold, dark, and dangerous.

**Nostalgic Cards:** These cards can represent that we have the belief that the best days are behind us and we need to get them back. They either are gone or are not yet here. This represents our longings for better days of joy, simplicity, and belonging, but we never accept that they don't exist.

**Perfect Nativity Cards:** We idealize the beauty of the Christmas nativity in a way that makes it sterile and far from us. This view isn't reconciled without messy and broken lives, and therefore, we falsely believe we are too messy for a savior who was born into a war-torn, poverty-ridden world.

Analyzing this misconception allows us to see reality clearly so we can root our desires even deeper in the eternal God. When we do this, we can truly celebrate. Because:

...When we see the dark, cold, and lonely world as it is, we can celebrate the warmth and safety Jesus offers us.

...When we see our longings as not fulfilled and, in fact, they are longings for God, then we can truly celebrate God's first advent and long for his second.

...When we see the nativity as it was, messy, dirt, war-town poverty, then we will not hide our own shame from God. Instead, we will embrace our Immanuel, God with us, who draws near.

Pastor Jeff challenged us to elevate our deeper longing so we can be honest about our humble estates, which in turn will allow us to celebrate and joyfully answer the question for a cold and dark world, “Why Christmas?”

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This is a fitting end for our advent series and is worthy of meditation and celebration. Because when we reflect on the following questions and answers:

Why Christmas? Our sin required justice.

Why incarnation? We couldn't save ourselves.

Why Virgin Birth? God's miraculously provision of sinless savior.

We have no choice but to celebrate!

Christmas is the good news before the good news!

It's time to celebrate!

## DISCUSSION & REFLECTION

To truly celebrate, let's reflect on our entire series by answering the following questions:

### WEEK ONE

- Answer the question in your own words: "Why Christmas?"
- Reflecting on this past advent, how did the Holy Spirit turn your heart back to God and to others?

### WEEK TWO

- Answer the question in your own words: "Why incarnation?"
- How did you experience your own personal helplessness during this advent?
- How did that impact your appreciation of the incarnation?

### WEEK THREE

- Answer the question in your own words: "Why the Virgin Birth?"
- How did you experience your need for God's power in your life?
- How did seeing that need impact your advent?

### WEEK FOUR

- Answer the question in your own words: "Why Celebrate?"
- How did this series help you appreciate and celebrate the birth of Christ?
- What do you need to celebrate more in the upcoming year?

### FINAL REFLECTION

- Which topic impacted you the most and why?
- Which topic impacted you the least and why?
- Which spiritual practice impacted you the most and why?
- Which spiritual practice impacted you the least and why?
- What is one big takeaway from this series you hope to hold on to?
- How will you put that into action in the new year?

### Close in Prayer

Close by praying the Lord's Prayer out loud.