

A Celebration of the Incarnation

By Jeff Noblit

sermonaudio.com

Bible Text: John 1:1-5; John 1:14-15
Preached on: Sunday, December 26, 2021

Anchored in Truth Ministries

1915 Avalon Ave.
Muscle Shoals, AL 35661

Website: www.anchoredintruth.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/anchoredintruth

Well, let's grab our Bibles and let's go to John's gospel and let's look again at John 1. John 1 as John gives his concise, succinct presentation of the coming of Christ and it's amazing how under the superintending of the Holy Spirit this, different gospel writers bring out different elements of the glory and the truth of Christ's coming. Let's look at it together there, first of all, in verse 1 going down through verse 5, and then we'll jump down to verses 14 and 15. John 1:1 through 5 and then verses 14 and 15. John writes,

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. 5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 John testified about Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'"

Pam and I started doing some cleaning up yesterday afternoon after the tribe of Noblit finally departed our house, and we didn't get finished, we saved some for today and I, I began to study over my notes and pray some and I was thinking about, though, with all of the stuff that goes on at Christmas, we need a cleaning up of our thinking perhaps, a cleaning up of our hearts and minds about now just what is this all about, and that's what I think I'm gonna do this morning is take you back to a sermon that I actually wrote 33 years ago on Christmas Eve in the hospital when my wife Pam gave birth to our firstborn child because the next day was Christmas, of course, so I wrote it there in the hospital and I've tweaked it but I've preached it ever since then. You know, I wonder when I became a pastor if I would have some of those sermons that long-tenured pastors have whereby they repeat them intentionally because, not because of the, the greatness of the delivery or the message but because of the foundational and important element of the doctrine of the truth therein. Dr. R. G. Lee, the pastor of the famed Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis had the sermon "Payday Someday," and the first time I heard it was

the 1,400th time he preached it. Um, and God used it. Um, Jonathan Edwards, uh, one of the great leaders of the Great Awakening in, in Colonial days had the sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," and everywhere he went he preached it and it was amazing the revival. Well, I'm not even slightly suggesting I have sermons of that caliber, that's not the important thing, but as I teach young pastors I'll tell them, "Find some basic truths and God will give you a nugget every so often that needs to be brought to the people again because it reinforces one of the most foundational elements of our faith." Well, this message certainly does that. I don't know that I can do any better than this at driving home to you the glorious truth of the Incarnation which is tied closely to the deity of Christ, that this one laid in Bethlehem's feed trough was God.

So let's unpack it again together this morning. I call it "The Celebration of the Incarnation." If we're gonna celebrate Christmas rightly, how do we celebrate it? Well, first, let's remind ourselves that Satan is always trying to dishonor and undermine and repudiate the great truths of God's word. He's very subtle, he's very slick, he's very conniving, he's very manipulative, and he tries to mix all kinds of things. Matter of fact, I believe one of Satan, if not his greatest, tool is the synchronization of worldly false doctrine in with true doctrine until the true doctrine isn't true anymore, just mixing it up. And so Christmas has, has like all of the great truths of our faith become smothered and is being smothered.

Now this is nothing new for us, it's worse in our country today than ever because we're more ungodly than ever, but it's been going on since the beginning of time and certainly since the birth of the church age. One of the ways is by mythologizing. Christmas is smothered out through mythologizing and I, I go back to my childhood for this because when I was a little boy, we didn't have all the television stations we have now, thank God, and there was only a few Christmas specials compared to today. But I always remembered how they would take the, the story of the, the virgin birth and the birth of Christ and they would add some things to it. Like I remember one of them that was real popular in my childhood was all these animals would show up at the birth of Jesus and they would be talking. Well, that might be sweet and cute but it's not biblical, it's distorting the truth. And, and then who can remember and the song is still on the radio this time of the year all the time, "The Little Drummer Boy." He goes and he doesn't have anything to offer but he plays his drum and all these...that's so sweet, it's just not biblical. Just because it's sweet and moving and warm and cuddly doesn't mean it's right. Look, I'm not saying that you can't watch anything like that, at least be mindful what the true message is.

There's just continual efforts to smother out the truth of Christmas and of all Bible truths. Mythologizing is one, then, of course, secularizing is another, just turning it into something that it's not, no real traditional biblical context. You'll often see Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus and not much else is said. It's like you could take this vague, broad story of hope and make it mean whatever you want it to mean. No, you can't. God tells us what it means. God tells us who he is and why he came. You know, these, uh, uh, subtle underminings like the Hallmark movies. Now we watch those Hallmark movies because I have to watch them, and I'll be honest, it is nice to see a, a movie that's clean

and decent and warm and the two people that outta get together always get together. Amen? Isn't that nice for a change? Isn't it nice to watch something that elevates man a little bit above the animals where everything is not based on your sex drive and your lust for something? But nevertheless, I can watch those Hallmark movies and I don't find hardly anything in them about the true doctrines of Christ and the Incarnation. So what I tell people if you enjoy things like that, just don't stop there, just the secularizing, just putting a secular spin on it and not staying with the biblical truth.

Then, of course, commercializing. My goodness, isn't that a massive smothering of the message of Christmas. Industry experts tell us that Americans will spend in excess of \$1 trillion this Christmas on Christmas stuff. Boy, would, would it be to God that one day we hear that Baptists and Evangelical churches have now given this Christmas season over \$1 trillion to world missions.

Then there's just the out-and-out, this is the one that's become so prominent in our country, the out-and-out and repudiation, just to cast it off, just to do away with it. Matter of fact, you are taboo if you even say Merry Christmas. They don't mind the season but let's just call it a holiday season and make sure you leave out any reference to Jesus Christ or anything that's holy and biblical.

Well, again, like I said, in all of Christian truth Satan is ever-working at this, he's ever-working to undermine and dishonor and discredit and remove the truths of God's word. Uh, you'll remember this. Uh, it's, having had children and now having grandchildren, I appreciate this story more. It was Sunday morning and, and dad was sitting on the pew and his little boy came up out of Sunday school and sat down beside him and he had a piece of paper and the dad said, "Well, son, what's on the piece of paper?" He said, "Oh, we had to draw a Christmas story this morning in Sunday school." He said, "Oh, well, let me see it." And so the dad looked at the piece of paper and there's a big jet airplane. He said, "Oh, this is a big jet airplane. Now, now what's that mean about Christmas?" He said, "Oh, dad, that's the flight to Egypt." He said, "Okay." He said, "Well, I see Joseph and Mary and I see baby Jesus but who's the guy up in front of the plane?" He said, "Well, dad, that's Pontius the pilot." And the dad said, "Well, there's Joseph and Mary and baby Jesus but who's the great big, round, fat guy in the back?" "Oh, that's round John Virgin. He's on the flight too."

Well, it's silly but when you have children it's more funny. But anyway, because that's I can see mine saying that but there's all kinds of twists and turns and smotherings and changes and so I just thought this morning, let's clean it out and focus afresh on the wonder and the glory of just what Christmas is.

The Christmas story actually in the biblical narrative, it's simple yet it is profound. It's a message that's not really hard to grasp actually. Now how God did it is impossible to grasp but what God did and what it means is not really hard to grasp. It's that God became man. God was born through the lowly virgin in the person of Jesus Christ that he might live this sinless life and go to a cross and there die for our sins and save us. It is the height of all hopes. It's the hope of all hopes, that God, remember Isaiah from a couple of

weeks ago, God was given to us, a child will be born to us, the prophet wrote. A, a son is given to us. And we remind ourselves that that, that is the statement that God did not come in the world for condemnation or wrath but at Christmas he came to us to save us.

Why would anyone have a problem with that message? Now think about that, just stop for a moment. Why would the world or anyone have a problem with that true message? I, I think there are two points I'd like to make right here and this is all introduction. First of all, the reason men have a problem with the true biblical message is because of the depravity of men's hearts. Our hearts are so corrupted by sin, our minds are so tainted with sin, our emotions are so marred by sin we have a natural resistance to anything that is of God. Secondly, I think it's the glory issue. Christmas is foundationally not even about you being saved, it's foundationally about the glory of God which, hallelujah, includes us being saved.

It's the glory issue. These events in Scripture, like all of God's works, are there to cause us to deem him worthy of honor and praise and worship. For example, in the, in the narrative, the Christmas narrative from Luke 2, beginning in verse 8, "In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood around them," and here it is, "the glory of the Lord shone around them," here's the glory of the Lord appearing in context with the birth of Christ, "and they were terribly frightened. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.'" And after they say that, it's like God says, "This can't just be said. It's too wondrous for that." Verse 13, "And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host," what are they doing, "praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest,'" the glory factor, "And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased." And we'll just stop right there and remind ourselves that perhaps Satan's greatest purpose, his primary ploy is to undermine the, the purpose of God and making much of himself. Satan wanted the glory for himself. He didn't mind you getting the glory for yourself as long as he can bring the glory off of God.

So I think when you know the truths of Scripture and, for this season, the truth of the Incarnation and Christmas, it should cause us to honor, it should cause us to praise, it should cause us to worship, and Satan hates that so he uses all these things to smother out Christmas.

In John 1:1, John writes here, "In the beginning was the Word," and here we have that word "Word" used for Christ, and you ask, "Well, why is that? Why is He called the Word?" Because he's the manifestation of God and generally speaking and not fully true, but our words should make statements about the truth of who we are. The Bible says out of the heart man speaketh, and sometimes our words are not completely accurate about who we are. We can put a little jam on the bread sometimes in how we say things about maybe ourselves or our accomplishments. We're not always accurate but in Jesus Christ you have the absolute accurate manifestation or word of God.

A true celebration of the Incarnation is that we celebrate the wonder and the glory of this and the true celebration of the Incarnation is we, when we remember that the baby laying in the feed trough in Bethlehem, first of all, was the pre-existing one. He existed before that morning that he was born in Bethlehem, as the writer writes, John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word." He was already the Word. He was there, Jesus was there when the beginning began. Genesis 1:1 tells us, "In the beginning God created." The word "God" there is the Hebrew Aramaic word Elohim. It, it has a plurality emphasis. Why would the writer under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit use the word "Elohim" there when he could've used another word? Because he's included God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Jesus was there. In Genesis 1:26 the Bible says God says, "Let Us make man in Our own image," a plurality, a plural pronoun. Why? God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are involved. Jesus was there. In John 8:58 talking to the Jews who venerated and honored Abraham as their head and as their leader and as their spiritual father, Jesus said to them, "Before Abraham was, I am." I always am. I existed even before Abraham existed.

Now when we talk about God becoming man in the Christmas message and the word is the Incarnation, um, I think it's good to remind ourselves that while his birth of the virgin Mary I like to say is the full and perhaps final Incarnation. It wasn't necessarily the first Incarnation because the Old Testament records appearances of Christ in human form before his birth to Mary and theologians call these, uh, Christophanies, Old Testament appearances of Jesus Christ. For example, in Genesis 32, we have Jacob, Jacob who was not yielded and surrendered to God and blessed by God as he needed to be, and Jacob tells that one night he wrestled, the Bible says he wrestled with a man all night. And then he says something astounding in verse 30 of that chapter, he said, "I have seen God face to face and yet my life has been preserved." Who is the man Jacob wrestled with all night who also was the face of God? There's only one, Jesus Christ. And by the way, can I remind you the reason, and this is very significant in our text, the reason Jacob said, "I wrestled with a man all night and I've seen God face to face and yet, yet I've been preserved," means that he could have only seen Jesus Christ. There's only one way to see God and not be consumed is see God in Jesus Christ. He's the provision for our sins whereby we can know God and have our sin penalty and our offensiveness removed through his merits on our behalf. Who was the one who wrestled with Jacob, who was a man but was God? It's Jesus Christ.

Then in Joshua 5, Joshua was, uh, planning his conquest of the Promised Land and Joshua's out sort of pacing and no doubt thinking about the attack the next day and looking at his fortifications or his troops and seeing how everything was, and the Bible says he just happened to look up and behold standing in front of him was one with sword drawn, and Joshua was immediately fearful and Joshua said to him, "Who are you? Are you on their side? Are you on our side?" And he said, "No," this is Jeff Noblit amplification, "No, no, I'm the Captain of the Lord's host. I didn't come to take sides, I came to take over." And the Bible says that Joshua fell down and worshiped, and you can't find anywhere in the biblical text where an angel allows worship. They will rebuke you and say, "No, don't worship me, worship our Father." But this one accepted the

worship. Who was this one with sword drawn who stood before Joshua and said, "I'm the Captain of the Lord's host," and accepted the worship of Joshua? Well, it was Jesus, an Old Testament appearance of Christ.

And before the angel of the Lord let him go, the text calls Jesus in that context, he says, "By the way, Joshua, take your sandals off, the land you're standing on is holy ground." We only see that one other time and that's when Moses was at the burning bush where God appeared in the burning bush and God said, "Moses, take off your sandals. I'm just not an angel." This is God and this ground is holy ground. Who is the one who is God who was holy, who was in human form before Joshua? It was Jesus Christ.

Then Nebuchadnezzar put up a great image in Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar said all the people when the orchestra plays must bow down and worship this image that I've erected. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, the Jewish boys who were faithful to worship only Jehovah decided they could not do that. They were brought before Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar said, "Well, let's try this one more time," because he really liked these boys, to be honest. They were good, they were good faithful servants of his and wise beyond his, his own administrators, the Bible says. "We're gonna have the orchestra play and let's get this right," and, and one of those spoke up and said, "Now King, we don't have to answer you on this." I love that. Child of God, do you understand there's a lot of things in your life you don't have to give an answer because God's already told you what to do? You don't have to figure out what you're gonna do because God's already said. He said, "King, whether you throw us in the fiery furnace or God delivers us in it or through it or whatever, it doesn't matter. God's already told us we don't worship anybody but Him." So they wouldn't do it. So Nebuchadnezzar had the furnace cranked up seven times hotter than before and he had some valiant warriors to take Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and cast them into the fiery furnace. The Bible says it consumed the soldiers who threw the boys in there. Then the king began to look in the furnace door and he looked around and he said, "Did we not throw three men into the furnace?" And they said, "Yes, three men." He said, "Well, I see four." And in his understanding, he's a polytheist, you understand, he said, "And one of them's not like the other three. He looks like a son of the gods." Who was the one who looked like a man but was very different than a man, walking with Shadrach and Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace? It was Jesus Christ appearing.

So when we think about Christ, we remind ourselves that he has already existed. He didn't begin at Bethlehem, he became a full human and experienced the full course of humanity starting in Bethlehem. But this one we worship and we honor and we praise on Christmas, we worship him and celebrate him as the pre-existing one. Secondly, let's note that we also must worship him as the prestigious one. The prestigious one. He began, he continues in verse 1 and says, "In the beginning was the Word," that's he's always been around, he's pre-existing, "and the Word was," notice how it's worded, "with God." This one who was born the first Christmas morning in Bethlehem was one who had been with God. That speaks of prestigiousness. It means distinct from all others. No one can claim that. No one could have ever claimed to have been with the heavenly Father and come from the heavenly Father, even having been with his Father from the very beginning,

even before the beginning began. He has such prestigiousness, distinction. He is of great, grand and unmatched distinction. He has a dignity beyond all others. He has unmitigatable power, wisdom and beauty, and his glory is such that when it is unveiled it will fill the entire universe. He is one who was with God.

You remember Prince William? Oh, he's still around. He's the Duke of Cambridge and second in line to the British throne. And then all of a sudden he married an upper middle class girl named Kate Middleton and upon her marriage, she's no longer Kate Middleton now she is Katherine Duchess of Cambridge. Why? She gained such prestige by being associated with the prince. Jesus is one who came from the Father and he comes with great and honorable prestige.

Let's remind ourselves that his Incarnation did not end when he left this earth having risen from the grave. Hebrews tells us he ascended into glory and into the Father's presence after he had made that atonement for our sins, and no one else has the right to be in the presence of the Father like he does. He's right now, Jesus the man now stands at the right hand of God to make intercession for us, the Bible says. Remember his high priestly prayer in John 17? "Now Father, glorify Me together with Yourself with the glory which I had with You before the world was." Prestige. He's always been with him. No one else has but he has.

John 17:11, "I'm no longer in the world yet they themselves," speaking of his disciples, "are in the world and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are." He has this unique oneness he's always had with God the Father that gives him a prestige no one else has. Now listen to this: and through Christ we gain the same prestige with him. You never become a Christ or a little god like the Mormons teach but there's a prestige in being his bride, his, his children that we'll have forever.

John 17:24, "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world." He's always been around and he's always been with the Father. He is connected with him and united with him in this union that no one else can comprehend. It's, it's, it's, it's incomparable to any other union or our companionship we can know in humanity, and it's incomprehensible to the human mind, this oneness of God the Father and God the Son Jesus Christ.

Oh, dear friend, I as your pastor, it would be the greatest joy of my heart to hear that the people under my preaching sometimes sit in quietness and marvel at the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ. That'd be my joy. Yes, it's a joy that you take good care of us, and it's a joy that you love the preaching, I, all of that's a joy to my heart but to hear that you marvel over Christ would be my greatest joy.

So we celebrate Christmas by honoring and praising and worship him as the pre-existing one and, secondly, as the, the prestigious one, and then finally, number 3, we worship properly and celebrate Christmas properly as remembering and honoring him as the

preeminent one. The preeminent one. The text says, "In the beginning was the Word," pre-existing one, "and the Word was with God," prestigious one, "and the Word was God." He wasn't just like God or pretty close to God or higher than us but less than God, he is God, God in the form of a little baby. What a marvel. Theologians say it and I say it all the time, he's God of very God which, which distinguishes him from the old, uh, pagan teaching of antiquity. They, in, in, in pagan religions where they had all kinds of gods they worshiped, they would sometimes call them demigods, gods that were higher than us but not absolute authority and power and sovereignty. Demigods. And the Mormom churches, Mormon church's doctrine teaches that you can one day become higher than you are now and kind of become your own little god, so to speak. That's, that's, that's garbage biblically. That's blasphemy. There's only one who is God and that is Jesus Christ that is the one who has put on human flesh.

He is the preeminent one. The Bible says Jesus is the Creator of all things. Jesus is the absolute sovereign, the omniscient, the omnipresent, the omnipotent holy God of very gods. Colossians 1:15 says, "He is the image of the invisible God." Hebrews 1:3 says he is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of God's nature. Colossians 2:9 says, "all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form," in Jesus Christ. Colossians 1:16, he is Creator of all things. Colossians 1:18, that in all things in him, or rather in all things he must have the preeminence. Then in Hebrews 1:8 God the Father calls Jesus the Son, God.

Some attempt today to wax eloquent in philosophy and ask the question, "Well, how could God become human and still become God?" Simple answer: it takes God to do that. There have been many men who would become God, have there not on the earth, these tyrant absolute monarchs of days gone by who wanted to be worshiped and honored? Many men who have become god but only one God became man and he's never ceased to be either one. He is God of very God. He is the preeminent one. He's born of a virgin which speaks of his holiness, that he's God. The magi came bringing precious gifts. Why? Because the holy one was born. At his birth the angels appeared to the shepherds saying, "Glory to God in the highest." Why? Because this isn't any regular birth, the, the holy one was born. He was God.

So if we're gonna celebrate Christmas properly, we must pause and contemplate and pray and honor and praise and worship him as the pre-existing one, the prestigious one, and the preeminent one. Now let me give you two conclusions for practical application, two things we should renew in this Christmas season. 1. We should renew the manner of our lives. Down in verse 14 it says, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." That is a condescension beyond comprehension. How can we grasp that God veiled himself of his glories and veiled himself with so many of his divine prerogatives and became human. It speaks of humility.

Church, are you listening to me? Have you come to understand that submission and humility to God's truth and God's person is the mark, the mark of real strength and power? The world will call you weak for that, the world will call you, you a loser for that, but in God's economy it's the humble who are strong. Nobody was more humble than

Christ when he clothed himself in the limitations of human flesh. So let's renew the manner of our lives concerning humility. Wives, humble yourselves afresh under the headships of your husbands. Children, humble yourselves afresh under the headship of your parents. Husbands, humble yourselves afresh under the headship of your church elders, your employer, and to meet the needs of your wife and family. Humble yourself afresh to know that you're but a sinner saved by grace.

We should renew the manner of our lives concerning humility. Jesus did not come to a palace or a castle, he did not come in regal splendor as a great king or mighty ruler. He was all those things but that's not the way he came. He came the baby of a poor family who had no place for him but to lie him in a feed trough. What a humility. Let's rededicate our lives to being humble and selfless and Christ-centered but, secondly, let's recommit our lives to being holy. The text simply says, "The Word became flesh," in other words, holiness came among us, holiness appeared in human form, and at Christmas time we must commit our lives to be holy before the Lord.

Child of God, listen to me: you're not like the world. You don't belong to the world. You are a member of a different family. You are a part of a different kingdom. You function according to higher principles. I hope you figured out that you don't fit in the Democratic party and you don't fit in the Republican party, though obviously we agree with the Republican party than the Democrat party. Boy, I don't want to say what I'm about to say. I tell you, the Republicans make me sick sometimes at the way they waffle and move around and compromise but we're dealing with a Democrat party that almost has never seen a sexual perversion they wouldn't celebrate, and an unborn child they wouldn't terminate. What kind of ungodly brash filth is that? Here's what I'm saying: no matter where we find ourselves, we just don't fit down here because we're somewhere else in someone else, and we're reminded of that on Christmas. He didn't fit any description or any idea anyone had about a Messiah or a Savior or a great King.

Well, secondly, not only the manner of our lives but let's rededicate ourselves to the mission of our lives. Verse 14 in the last part he says he came full of grace and truth. Oh, my goodness, on the one hand that makes us want to dig a hole and just cry out with great gratitude and thanksgiving, on the other hand it should fill us with such excitement we could run through a wall. The holy one came among us and did not come to judge us. He could have, that would've been righteous but he came full. Now notice that word "full." You know how full God can be? "Pastor, you outta seen how full I was yesterday after I got through eating." God is, God is infinitely full because he has no bounds. Full of grace, that's unmerited favor. "Well, God, how much can You forgive and how much can You cleanse, and how longsuffering can You be?" And God says, "Well, I'm infinite and I'm full of grace and truth." Wow. The point is he came on a mission to find sinners and he found a bunch of them and he saves them.

The angel tells Joseph in Matthew 1:21, "He will save His people from their sins," and can I say to you this morning he will save his people from their sin. He will not fail. He will not fall short. He will not miss a few. He will save his people from their sins. Now he's called us to join him in the mission, he's called us to join him in the plan. Remember

the Apostle Paul when he's reviewing what he's about in his ministry says, "I came, I come and I preach Christ not born in Bethlehem of the virgin. No, I came and I preached Christ crucified." Matter of fact, the Bible never tells us to remember his birth. Certainly we do, it's in the Scriptures and we should, but not in any special way are we ever told to remember his birth. We're always told to remember his death in the Lord's Supper, baptism, remember his death. Why? Because that's where your pardon was accomplished. That's where your soul, salvation was procured and that's his mission. He was born to die, to rise again.

Let's rededicate ourselves in our small groups and in our True Church Conference and in our daily lives to be after souls. You can always give a word of testimony, share something of the things of Christ. I've gotten to do that a time or two lately and what about you? Let's redo our mission to be about his mission and let's never separate the Incarnation from the crucifixion because it was never intended to be separated. But if we properly celebrate Christmas, we will renew the manner of our lives and we'll renew the method or the manner or the mission of our lives.

Some years ago, I, I think it was John MacArthur's little Christmas book, of course, we're looking at maybe 30 years ago, I don't know if it's even around anymore. But he shares a story in there of a more ecclesiastical, I guess I should say, ecumenical kind of church family and they when they have their babies, they immediately get the babies to the church so the priest can do the, the sprinkling of water. They feel like that does something that has to do with their salvation, so the family rushes to the church and they have the baby sprinkled and there's a little service there and the tradition is after they take the baby home, there's a, a big party celebration at the house and unfortunately a lot of these settings involves a lot of drinking. And on this occasion, the man had taken the little baby and he put it on the first bedroom off the foyer of the house in the middle of the bed and someone came in to celebrate, all the friends and family come over for the party and the celebration of the christening and someone threw a heavy coat onto the baby and another one came in and threw another heavy coat not knowing the child was there, and sometime later after several coats have been thrown on that front bedroom bed, the mom came in and found her baby dead.

That's what Satan would love to do to Christmas, just smother it out. But not us. Not us. We join together this morning in great joy and great honor and great worship that the baby laying in Bethlehem's feed trough was the pre-existing one, the baby laying in Bethlehem's feed trough was the prestigious one, the baby laying in Bethlehem's feed trough was the preeminent one, the baby laying in Bethlehem's feed trough was God.

Now this is where the sermon ends but can I charge you in love this morning, have you settled with Christ? Have you turned to Christ and said, "O Christ, save me, cleanse me"? He's full of grace and mercy. I'm not asking you have you been baptized, joined a church, repeated a prayer, or walked down an aisle. Those things are good but have you from your heart come to a settled rest in Jesus Christ? If not, do that today and then you can become a true worshiper of Jesus Christ.