

Jesus at the Center

Christmas 2015

Introduction

One of the focal points of the house I grew up in...

My dad's Nativity set

Nativity – picture of what that first Christmas might have looked like

St. Francis Assisi – 1223 – credited with the first one

Most of us know the players involved in the nativity

Jesus

Joseph and Mary

The Wise Men – Magi – 3 Kings (3 gifts)

The Shepherds

The animals

Has been a staple in the Christmas celebration

Keep the season about the real reason – Jesus

Now – town by town – nativities are removed from public places

Hate the way our nation turning from our roots

I'm concerned less whether the nativity is being set up in the town square and more about how it's set up in our hearts.

How is it Set Up in You?

The key to the nativity is in how you set it up

There's a focal point – a center point
Everything/everyone is looking in that direction

In some ways – the nativity is a picture of our own lives
In the deep south – Bible belt
Most would say that God/Jesus is a part of their life

Most think it's okay that He is included
But the real key isn't whether He is included
But is He at the center?

Most have Jesus in their life – but...

Shepherds at the center.

Shepherds represent our jobs/career
They were working on that first Christmas
Pulling an all-nighter

Our jobs are where we spend most of our time
Or students – school
We give our best and most to it
Quickly becomes the most important thing to us

Most of our social life comes from the workplace

40 hours a week – at least – hard to find 15 minutes with God

It doesn't look right that way
It doesn't work right that way

You discover quickly – doesn't bring happiness
Can't solve your problems
Doesn't have the power to

Wise Men at the center.

Wise men represent money – popularity – fame – success

None of us would say it's that important to us
But we act that way – don't we?

Some of us will get into debt with money we don't have
To impress people we don't even like

If you've ever climbed the ladder of success
Probably realized that it was leaning against the wrong building
Didn't satisfy

Success tricks you – end up in debt

Life is quickly messed up when that's the way we order it
None of us really want it that way

Joseph and Mary at the center.

They represent family
Certainly family is supposed to first – right?

Some think so
Order their whole lives around their kids
Think it more important to be at a soccer game than church

Many let relationships rule their lives
What they think matters too much
Unforgiveness – hurt

We thought people could make us happy
Expecting something from them that only God could do

People can never make us happy

Life is quickly messed up when that's the way we order it
None of us really want it that way

Animals at the center.

They represent everything in life that brings us pleasure
Pets – hobbies – sports teams – recreation – vacation

All of these are good – and important
But can't be at the center of our life
Can't be what we live for
Because ultimately can't bring us true happiness

One of the things that I like most about my job
Help people reorder their lives
Put them on a clear path – clear steps

Begins by putting...

Jesus at the center. (set it up right)

When Jesus is at the center – can be the hub of our life
Touches all the other areas

Look at this verse
Shows the “Supremacy of Christ”...

(Colossians 1:15-17 MSG) We look at this Son and see the God who cannot be seen. We look at this Son and see God's original purpose in everything created. For everything, absolutely everything, above and below, visible and invisible—everything got started in him and finds its purpose in him. He was

there before any of it came into existence and holds it all together right up to this moment.

Vs. 15 – Jesus shows us what God looks like

We see God – and God sees us

Humanity of Jesus – theology of identification

Felt what you feel

He understands – pain – relationships

Only Jesus can give purpose to the parts of your life

Everything finds purpose in Him

Nothing in your life will work without Him

He created it – only one that can make it work

Only He hold it all together

Message is dedicated to those whose lives are falling apart

Only Jesus can put your life back together

How?

1. Invite Jesus to take His rightful place.

He can't just be in your life

He must be the priority relationship

Story – my testimony – Christmas 1978 (37 years ago)

2. Involve Him in every area of my life.

What we do here – make Christianity fit into everyday life

He wants to be in every part

In your job – money – marriage – hurts – hobbies – football

He is and must be more than a Sunday God
Can't compartmentalize Him to one day

Highlands – give people a relevant Christianity

3. Ignite a fresh passion to know Him more.

That's what I love about this time of the year
New Year – new kind of relationship with God
It will be the best year ever if it's the best year spiritually

My challenge – give me one year of your life!
21 days of prayer

If you do – the God who holds it all together
Will put the pieces back together
He's the only One who can

Everything was created by Him
Everything finds its purpose in Him
Everything is held together by Him

Jesus at the Center of it All