

On Eagles' Wings Pt 317

by Don Courville

The sermon emphasizes the importance of making room for Jesus in our hearts during Christmas and recognizing His true significance in our lives.

Duration: 36:15

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Mark 10:17-22, Luke 2:7, John 3:16, Acts 20:35, Revelation 2:1-5

Topics: "Radio Show"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes how God can transform a worthless and sinful life into something beautiful and valuable. He compares this transformation to an artist turning a cheap canvas into a valuable painting. The preacher also shares a story about a man with tongue cancer who had his last opportunity to speak before surgery. This story serves as a reminder of the importance of using our time, talents, and resources to serve God. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the ultimate act of giving - God giving His only Son for the salvation of the world - and encourages listeners to share the message of Jesus with others.

Transcript

We welcome you today to On Eagle's Wings, actually a ministry of Maranatha Baptist Church. It's whose birthday? Jesus' birthday. Who gets the gifts? Well, those of us that love the Lord Jesus will give Him gifts, but, of course, the greatest gift we give Him is our love.

It's Jesus' birthday. I don't really like the term Christ Mass. We call it Christmas.

It's really the celebration of His coming, and it's been pretty paganized. But today, Lord Jesus, we bow before You. We humble ourselves and acknowledge that it's Your birthday.

Thank You for coming, and we know that You came to die on the cross. And even though the world doesn't really know and understand why You came, Lord, we still celebrate Your birth, even though we get the gifts. And somehow we've forgotten, to our shame, why You really came.

Earth gave You a cradle and a cross, beatings, reviling and loss, and there was no warm welcome then when You came but for a few shepherds and then a couple years later some wise men. And I guess, Lord, things haven't changed much. You're still forgotten, even in all the rush.

Our world is in a mess. People are hurt, lonely and comfortless. And men still need a Savior, a friend who is able to keep them from their sin.

But we thank You for coming down from above to meet us where we are, where we're at with Your love. So from those of us who understand, we send You our hearts, wrapped in our devotion and signed with our tears, because it's Your birthday, Jesus. And we thank You that You came.

And, Lord, we ask You to use this time today on this program to draw us closer to You. You're the reason for this season. Many hurting hearts, many struggling.

And, Lord, we know that You came to set the captives free, free from our sin and free from self. And we pray that You'd anoint our ears to hear, my tongue to speak, in Jesus' name. Amen.

It was W. Herschel Ford, who a number of years ago had a message on I'm Dreaming of a Right Christmas. And he talked about a right Christmas, including some things. It included making room for Jesus.

It included a right worship. It included the grace of giving. And it included the matter of telling others about Jesus.

You know, I'm amazed how many people have not shared Jesus with me in situations where we were strangers. And I'm always trying to look for somebody to share Jesus with. How few times there's been somebody that came up to me and wanted to hand me a track or try to lead me to the Lord.

There's something wrong if there's so many Christians around and so few do that. Now, when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east and are come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet. And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah, for out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people Israel.

Then Herod, when he had privately called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, Go and search diligently for the young child, and when you have found him, bring me word again that I may come and worship him also. And when they had heard the king, they departed in lull.

The star which they saw in the east went before them till it came and stood over where the young child was. You have to understand he is probably about two years old at this time. And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child, with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. His name was to be called Jesus because he would save us from our sins, and then also he was called Emmanuel because it was God with us. This article that Herschel Ford had written on these things that a right Christmas includes might be an interesting thing for us to just stop and think about it.

You know, as I'm talking to you, and as I share things that Christmas means to me, and through the day we will share with each other about what Christmas means to us. I was always sensitive, even as a little kid, about Christmas. And then once I got it figured out on the deception that was going on about Santa Claus and all that kind of stuff, we haven't believed in deceiving our kids on this, especially in the latter years as we began to see the diabolical scheming of Satan.

Even Santa sounds so close to what the meaning of the Greek word Satan, Santana, means. We shouldn't have to do with deception. Surprises are fine and fun, but to pretend like some mystical person is going to give gifts to your children, Satan can get in there and take the glory, and so we shouldn't deceive.

But let me ask you a question that Herschel Ford had asked. He said, what does Christmas mean to you? You know, a lot of us, it means a lot of hard work, especially if you're having company, or if you're working somewhere and all the stores are crowded with people, and post office, if you work at the post office and you have to work overtime with all the mail, and with all the trains and the buses and planes carrying record crowds, it's really probably the biggest time of the year for money making. And to some people, Christmas means some time with the relatives, and it's a happy time.

I enjoy it. My kids enjoyed it. I enjoyed it as a kid.

But to some people, Christmas means maybe something else, a sad memory, because there's a loved one not there, and we need to remember them, too, and go make some contact with them, call them, go see them. Many of them are having their first Christmas without a loved one. I know we have a good friend who her mate died this spring on the birthday of one of our children, and it's been very hard for her.

She wants to die and go be with her husband. Very hard. And then, of course, to some people it means parties, drinking, having a good time.

They talk about Christmas liquor and whiskey, and at the same time they are putting this together with the birth of Christ, and it doesn't seem to go together, does it? But to a lot of people, Christmas just means nothing, because they don't know Jesus. December 25th for them is just another day. And by the way, He probably wasn't born on December 25th.

If you've done your biblical studying, it might have been more likely in the fall. But Christmas means something to Christians. First of all, it means that God loves us.

It means that God loved us with all His heart. If you think about this one coming down and dying on the cross for us, giving Himself, He came down to die for us, and they crowned Him with thorns. And many a king a golden crown has worn, but only one a diadem of thorn.

For many a king has sat on jewel throne, but only one hung on a cross alone. Though garland gay streets cheered by the crowd, great kings have ridden, one with his head bowed. Beneath the burden of His cross, passed on to die on calvary, one king, but one.

All other kingdoms pass, are passing now, save His who wore the bramble on His bow. Christmas to me means God loves me. And, friend, I hope you understand that Christmas was God's gift of His Son to us, born of a virgin.

That blood that He had, as I understand medically, the blood comes from the man. And so, since God was the initiator of life, that blood was holy. What type of blood was it? It was H-type, holy blood that He had, and it was holy blood that He shed on the cross.

It was holy blood that satisfied the Father's demand for justice for our sin. It was holy blood that Christ shed on the tree for you and me, for our sins, because it was that God loved you and me. So it means that God loves us.

It means that this Savior was born to die for our sins, but also He was born to set us an example with His life. And then He was born to be raised for our justification, as the Scripture says. And He was born to ascend on high and make intercession for us.

He was born to reign in the rural, and we understand in the Scriptures that in Him we live and we move and we have our being. In Him we have life. In Christ, as Ephesians says, we are seated with Him in the heavenlies.

But it shows us our God, His coming into the world. And He was born to give us hope, hope of His coming again. He's going to gather us all together someday.

And maybe by the time this tape has reached the station and the message has gone out, He has come, and you've been left behind. Oh, what a terrible thing to miss Jesus, to miss life, to miss heaven, and have to go to an eternal hell where you're damned for all eternity because you would not confess before God that He was holy and that you were a sinner. But let me tell you something else that Christmas means.

It means that we have a companion for life. We have a friend in the hour of our need, in the hour of death. We have a brother that sticks closer to us than any.

Christmas means everything to the Christian. It's not just a Christ Mass. It's that God came, Emmanuel, to live with us.

And so if we're to have this right Christmas, as Herschel Ford said, there are certain things that we as Christians need to recognize that must be there if it'll be right. We have to get through the paganized idea of trees and wreaths and all these things. And I don't believe it'll do any good to go on crusades against these things.

I have a little girl that's twice now prayed in a Christmas tree. And, well, there it sits. She prayed for it, so let it sit.

It's a tree. But we don't worship the paganized cult that established this. But we must include in our Christmas room for Jesus.

When Mary and Joseph came to the inn, the innkeeper said, There's no room. Oh, what a sad thing that this Christmas day that there would be no room in our heart for Jesus. He's the one that supposedly we're having the birthday party for.

But are you abiding in His presence? Oh, that innkeeper, he missed Christmas. He missed all the meaning. Or did he? You know, he did open up a little side cavern back there where there was a manger.

There was no room in the inn. But he did give what he could. And maybe there's not much room left in your heart for Jesus.

You've been so busy working and trying to take care of the issues of life, family. And if you look close within, is there really much room for Jesus in your heart? As you're working so hard and going about, are you really making room for Jesus? The man in the inn, there were many guests in the hotel. But, you know, they were soon gone and forgotten.

But that one guest he had in his inn, he was never forgotten. And there'll be many things in your life and mind, and we'll do many things. But really only that which is done with Jesus in mind, and we do for His glory, will last.

Isn't that true? If he had allowed Jesus to be born, maybe if he gave up his own bedroom. Why, the thought maybe never entered his mind. But could it be that today, this one that was born almost 2,000 years ago, is wanting to get into the main room of your life, your heart room, and have all your devotion? No room in the inn? No room in your heart, but you say, I'm a Christian.

Yes, you could be a Christian, but really is Jesus the Lord of your heart? So if he'd allowed Jesus to be born there in his own room, it might have been different. He was born for you and me in that position of humility. And he wants us to live in his presence in a position of humility.

So if you and I today would say there's no room for Jesus if your heart and life and mind, if they are just filled with things, you know, we could miss the good thing, and it's Jesus. Wouldn't it be a good thing, this Christmas, for you and me just to throw everything else out and just make room for Christ, and to let him have all the hopes that we have, all the desires of our heart, and give him all our disappointments and all our dreams that haven't come about, and just say, Lord, it doesn't matter. I just want you and to love you with all my heart.

And, of course, you know, this might mean, since this is a revival ministry, that we might have to touch on giving up some sins of the flesh. Oh, these things that we just assumed we not hear some preacher talk about, these sins of the flesh, they, you know, they're sort of dirty. But really, can we have room for Jesus in our heart if we have these things, this slow-to-forgive spirit, this too-quick-to-speak spirit, this non-submissive spirit, this touchiness, this uncooperativeness that we have to work with God, to work with others, this undisciplined life of the flesh, this lack of love, whatever, this lust for pleasure more than loving the Lord with all our heart.

To make room for Jesus might mean that we might have to give up these sins of the flesh, the sins of the disposition, sins of envy of someone. Maybe you hate someone. How can you really enjoy Jesus if you've got hate in your life? Maybe you think somebody has really just ruined your life, or you really haven't been living at the cross to just yield it to him.

A lot of Christians have gone through some tough things, a lot tougher things than somebody bumping you off your job or messing up your plans. Maybe you just have an unforgiving spirit towards someone that's going to ruin your Christmas. You know, a clear conscience is a pretty precious thing.

It's a devastating thing to our lives to have a seared conscience. How can you enjoy Christmas if you have a spirit like that? You must throw that spirit out. You've got to have room for Jesus, but he's not going to be sharing that room with that self-confident spirit, that self-condemning spirit, the resentful spirit that you have, that bitter unforgiveness.

He's not going to really fellowship with you and me. It was the captain of a whaling boat who went to church one Sunday, and the preacher talked to him later and learned that the sermon had made absolutely no impression upon him. And to tell the truth, sir, replied the captain, all the time that you were talking I was thinking about where I could likely find my next whale.

I have no room in my heart for anything else but whales. Is this true of you? Is your heart so full of other things that there's no room in it for Jesus? No room in the end. What a sad thing to come to the end of your life and you look back over it, and in the end of your life there's just been no room for Jesus.

Oh, you say, I was very religious. I went to church every Sunday of the year unless I was sick, and I was in prayer meeting all the time, and I gave my tithe, and I gave extra things to help the poor, and I was busy. I went on visitation.

You know, one of the things the Lord pricked me about in the revival meetings, and, you know, revival is a spiritual overhaul. One night the Lord woke me up early in the morning. I think it was 3 o'clock, 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning, and I went in there and I just said, Lord, what do you want to say to me? And he said, Revelation 2, the letter to Ephesians.

And I began to read that in Revelation chapter 2 and the letter to the Ephesians. You know, they were a very industrious, busy church, and the Scripture said, And to the angel of the church of Ephesus write, These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil.

And thou hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars, and hast borne, and hast patience for my name's sake, hast labored, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. And that's what God said to me that morning.

He said, You're moving away from just loving me. You're so busy with all these things and all these ministries. And He said, Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Oh, that was quite a jolting thing for me, but I was so glad that I could hear. I covet above all things the presence of God, and to hear Him speak to me. I don't want to come to the end of my life and the end of my ministry, and my goal is to be able to get to be an old man with gray or white hair and still be godly amidst all of this stuff we've got to go through.

Oh, what a tender thing to have Jesus come to me and tell me that I was moving away from just loving Him. It was a precious time. It wasn't a... You know, we don't like to have sin pointed out.

We don't like to confess our faults one to another, and we sure don't like to confess it to the Lord. But I did. He was right.

He's always right. It's amazing how many times we think we're right and we're really wrong. You know, it's pride when we refuse to admit that we're wrong.

And, you know, that's one of the reasons a lot of our churches, we don't see souls getting saved. And if I could share some stuff with you about some of these stories, this is what the testimony of revival is. When God's people will get right, then the unsaved will get saved.

If they want to get saved, their problem is us. We're the barrier. The church is the barrier in America.

And unless we repent, God's going to spank us. We're still on the line-up. Matter of fact, we're on death's row if we don't repent of all of our busyness and the barrenness and the hypocrisy.

No room in the end. In the end of this day, will there have been room for Jesus? Will there have been time for prayer and reading the Bible with the family? Or was it just all gifts and eat and whatever else? And so, as you travel along the highway of life, and you see a sign along the road there by the motel that says, there's no vacancy. If the Spirit of God would happen to prod your heart and say, there's no vacancy.

He says, I'm knocking. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man will hear my voice and open the door, I'll come in, and we'll sup with him, we'll have fellowship with you.

But he says, so often there's just a no vacancy sign. But yet you have time for your pleasure, you have time for your TV, you have time for your newspaper, time for your novels, time for your friends and your sports, and time for your hobbies and your games. And really, when God comes, you say, oh God, I'm so busy.

Or I've done my duty, I went to church, I even read my Bible for two minutes today. Isn't that enough? And the Lord, I just wonder if we're like the young rich ruler, so many times he just stands there, and we walk away to do our own thing. You know, the Lord nailed him right on his heart, right where it was.

He loved all his stuff more than Jesus. And Jesus will do that to you. He'll come and say, what about this? You'll give up everything, but not this area, Lord.

Whatever area you and I are unwilling to let go of, that will become an idol in our life. No vacancy. You know, some of us, we've just hung that same old sign out, year after year, Jesus comes by, no vacancy.

Oh, we've got, I'm a Christian sign hung out, but our heart is all filled up, there's no vacancy. And we say to the Lord, why don't you go out to the barn, just like the innkeeper. Well, you can have the barn.

You can have your baby in the barn, lady. I don't care. That won't bother me.

Nobody else wants the barn. And whatever Jesus gets from us really shows how much we love him. You know, this is supposed to be the season for giving.

But many only give if they can get something in return. I won't give something to so-and-so, because I know they never give anything back. And he wants us to be like good Samaritans.

The amazing thing is the most, the more that the life of Christ is produced through a believer's life, the ones that have the life of Christ living in their life and producing the power of the Spirit-filled life and the working of Jesus Christ often have to pay the price tag themselves. It's hard for rich people to hear, as we've lived by faith for years, have had very few times of regular salaries. It's been mostly those that have

the least that give the most to us.

It keeps us humble. Sometimes it makes us cry. No vacancy on the front of that inn that night.

There's no room for here for you. My heart's all filled up, so just go away. But you could have some room out in the barn.

What a sad thing, no room for Jesus. And that's just like an engine on the train saying, or the train saying, I have no room for the engine. And that engine saying, I have no room for the steam.

Or trees saying, there's no room for the sap. The ocean saying, there's no room for the tide. And the heavens saying, there's no room for the stars.

Or like the garden saying, I'm sorry, but there's no room for flowers or fruit. Oh, that we could make room for Jesus in our heart today. And then a right Christmas would also include worship.

When Jesus was born, a wonderful miracle took place, you know. The heavens opened up and the angel came down and he spoke to a group of shepherds on the Judean hill. He said unto you, was born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.

You'll find him wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. And you know, those little shepherds, they tore off to town and they found the baby. And they knelt down and they worshiped him.

A right Christmas will include worship. If you have a right Christmas, you must come and worship him. If you don't have worship, you haven't had a right Christmas.

Is there room for worship in your life today? It seems to be a lost art with many Christians. And my goal in the church is to get us to a point where we can worship without having bad spirits around and recognizing that He's the one that we meet together for. But it's a lost art.

We don't have time to stop and look up in God's face and just worship Him. I like to do that at night, you know. I like to get out there and look up in the stars and just worship God.

I do that many times. I just go out there and worship God, have a special time with Him. But do you have time? And many never enter God's house.

They say we don't have time for worship. Never worship Him anywhere. You know, the heathen look up and the son and he worships the son.

The dog worships as he gazes into his master's face. And the lover worships his sweetheart. And the baby worships its mother.

But God's children, saved and blessed in a million ways, go on and on, never lift enough our hearts to God and praise very much. It's said that Longfellow could take a worthless sheet of paper and write upon it a poem worth \$6,000. Rockefeller could sign his name to a check and it would be worth millions.

A mechanic could take \$5 worth of material and make it worth \$50. The artist could take a cheap piece of canvas and paint a picture which in future years would be worth thousands of dollars or maybe millions. And God can take a worthless, sinful life like yours or mine.

He can wash it in the blood of Christ and He can put His Spirit in us and He can make it a blessing to the world if we come as the shepherds did and if we kneel down before Him and worship Him and surrender to Him and let Him have His way with us. He can make your life beautiful. He can bring music out of those broken chords.

He can bring the sweet song of Calvary into your soul if you only let Him have His way with thee. A man was brought to a great clinic for an operation and he had a cancer of the tongue and the surgeon was going to remove the tongue altogether. And a large group of professors and students were looking on when the surgeon said to the patient, This will be your last opportunity to speak.

Would you like to say anything before the operation? And the man looked up into the faces of all that company and cried out, Praise be to Jesus Christ throughout all eternity oh, that we might feel the same way about Him. Am I talking to those who have not time for worship? So as this day has come, let me encourage you to worship. I will not go on this way.

I will give the worship of Christ first place in my life. I will join His other children and let my life, my lips and my heart praise His matchless name. And then the right Christmas also includes the grace of giving.

And here we see the wise men coming a couple of years later with their gifts. And what were the gifts? Well, they were gold and frankincense and myrrh. Each gift was a gift of value.

And we know more about Jesus than they did. He's done more for us than He did for them. Are we giving ourselves? They had to pay a lot to make that trip.

And we can just open our heart up to them right now. Are we giving them our time and our talents and our money? In time past, there were some churches in a southern Illinois town that were torn down. And when they tore them down, they saw some strange red marks that were found in the cement.

So a chemist decided to analyze those marks and he found them to be human blood. You see, back in those pioneer days, the men who loved God built these churches with their blood. Many times their hands were frozen and bleeding and they kept on with their work and they gave their own blood for the Christ they loved.

What are you giving? What are you going to give Christ today? The matter of giving reached a climax on the cross. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. God gave His all.

Is it any wonder that the one that loves Jesus will be willing to give His all? Look at Jesus as He died there for you. He's giving. Giving all that He has for you.

Must Jesus give all and we give nothing in return? Surely, surely, as a Christian, we can love Him and give to Him without any regret, can't we? Christmas is giving. But do we give to the one who gave His all? And then one other thing in closing up, that Mr. Ford had mentioned that Christmas included the matter of telling others about Jesus. I thought, oh, that's interesting.

If I really love Him, I tell others about Jesus. You know, there's the angels. They're telling about Jesus.

Many years men had looked for this Messiah. You know, they longed for Him. They prayed for Him.

And then when He showed up, many wouldn't even receive Him. How about that? You and I have this opportunity to meet God, to know God, to have our sins forgiven. But what a terrible thing to miss Him as they did.

They longed for Him to come. They filled their hearts with satisfaction with all the things that they were doing. And now the angel announces that He's been born.

And the long night of waiting is over. And the angel had brought the gladdest and the sweetest message the world had ever heard. In fact, the world's never been the same since Jesus came.

But men are still in the darkness of sin. Where are you at? Are you in your sin? You can come out. Men are looking for something.

I talked to somebody the other day, and I said, people are looking for Jesus. But you know, many don't know what they're looking for. But when they see Jesus in a life, it's like water to a man in the desert, and they're drawn to Him.

But they're looking for something that satisfies. Are you satisfied with Jesus? You can tell the one that's got to Jesus, He's content, He's satisfied. He's not searching anymore.

He's found it. Something which will give you peace and joy is Jesus. We know what the need is, because we found the need to be met in Jesus.

Jesus can do for you far more than you ever imagined. Now unto Him that's able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think. Jesus loved us and died for us, and He wants us to live for Him, and He wants us to seek out opportunities to tell others about Him.

You see, a right Christmas includes telling others about Jesus. And this is where we find our greatest joy in lifting the loads of those who have heavy burdens on them and pointing them to Christ, seeing them come to know Jesus as their Savior. So let's do these things.

Let's make room for Jesus in our hearts and lives. Let's bow down and worship Him. Let's bring our gifts unto Him, and then let's tell others this old, old story of Jesus and His love that we can truly have a right Christmas.

Well, may God bless you as you celebrate the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. Until next time, keep focused on Jesus, my friend.

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