

# How Should We Celebrate Christmas?

by Timothy Tow

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*Christmas is not just a celebration, but an opportunity to give ourselves anew to God and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.*

**Scripture:** Exodus 23:15, Luke 14:12, Luke 15:23, John 3:16

**Topics:** "Christmas Celebration", "Evangelism"

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## Description

Timothy Tow preaches about the true meaning of Christmas, emphasizing that it is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who offers salvation and everlasting life to all who believe in Him. He urges worshippers to focus on Jesus as the reason for the season, rather than getting caught up in commercialism, merrymaking, or material gift-giving. Timothy Tow encourages a spirit of evangelism during Christmas, sharing the message of salvation with loved ones and strangers alike, and emphasizes the importance of worship, praise, and thanksgiving as essential components of the holiday.

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## Transcript

Text : "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn 3:16 ).

Walk down Orchard Road today and ask ten passers-by what is Christmas? Not one in five would be able to give you the right answer. According to Singapore 's last census on religious adherents, 14 per cent were Christians. Last month's census after a decade discloses an increase of 3 per cent, from 14 to 17. (Let us strive to raise this increase to 25% in the next ten years should the Lord tarry!)

To worshippers at Life Church this morning, even old timers, I have brought back from Chiang Mai where we spent a week's vacation this Christmas message to you. I have a question, "How should we celebrate Christmas?"

First of all, Christmas is not Santa Claus. This is what I heard on the Rediffusion many years ago. Two Teochew businessmen, in their discussion, concluded Christmas was the birthday of Santa Claus, founder of departmental stores. Why? Because every departmental store displayed at the doorway a figure of Santa Claus.

We went to Chiang Mai to visit Nirand and Jess this time. It happened to be the Thai king's birthday. The whole city was lit up with bright lights. We thought this was for Christmas. On examination it was the

birthday of the Thai king.

Not Santa nor any human sage or saviour is Christmas. It is the birthday of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, come down to earth, to be born of the virgin Mary. That is God's plan of salvation, good tidings of great joy, offered to a lost mankind. Whosoever would believe in Him, his sins are forgiven and he shall have life everlasting. Only Jesus can do this because He is the Virgin Born, God become Man. All the heads of all other religions are mere men, so when they die, they are gone. None ever claimed to be Saviour. But Jesus, being the God-Man, lives forever. So only He can save us.

There are some visitors, perhaps for the first time. Have you received the Lord Jesus Christ into your heart? May you do so today, if you have not, and may God bless you with the peace and joy of salvation.

Secondly, Christmas is not Commercialism. Why are business houses so charmingly decorated even weeks before Christmas? It is for your pocket! Taking advantage of the Season they go all out to lure you to buy their goods. So, some Christians take a negative attitude against Christmas and ban any Christmas celebration in their Church. But we BPs take a positive attitude. We counter commercialism with evangelism. Evangelism is the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Let every pastor preach the word of salvation and let every church member do his or her part to bring in their unsaved loved ones and friends to hear the Word. May you bring your unsaved father and mother, uncles and aunts, your best friend to our Christmas Eve Service tonight.

Let members of the Church bend every effort to go out to speak at homes or mission stations, even to those in neighbouring countries. In Indonesia , the State Radio even invites our Pastors to preach! What an open door of opportunity to make Christ known.

Let the Sunday School also stress the word of salvation to our own young people. For there are the children even of Session members, according to a report, who are not sure of their salvation.

Thirdly, Christmas is not merrymaking and getting drunk. Merrymaking, however, is mentioned in Luke 15 when the Father said concerning the prodigal son, "And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry" (Lk 15:23 ). Our merrymaking is rather a joyous celebration. It is the true Christmas spirit with the angel announcing the Saviour's birth, "I bring you tidings of great joy."

In such celebration, we eat a good meal with our family and friends, but we must not lack one thing. Jesus says, "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just" (Lk14:12-14). For Christmas, we therefore give a portion of our offerings to the sick and needy members of the Church and even to brothers and sisters beyond our Church who deserve our help.

Last but not least, Christmas is not giving gifts to loved ones and friends only, but rather giving ourselves anew to God. This leads us to worship. Worship is the mother of all virtues, says, St Augustine . What is Christmas without worship?

Worship includes praise and thanksgiving. All the carols we sing to praise His Name are part of our worship. Now when we praise the Lord He blesses our hearts with peace. He takes away our sins and our many burdens. We have not a merry Christmas which is of the world but rather a joyous Christmas that is

of the heavenlies.

Without thanksgiving worship is not complete. Ex 23:15 says, "And none shall appear before me empty." The offering of gold, frankincense and myrrh by the Wisemen is patterned for our thanksgiving at Christmas. In Chinese terms it is presenting a big ang pow , sharks fin and bird's nest, very costly items of food only the rich can afford. These costly gifts become provision for the Holy Family to use on their long journey to Egypt . In Jesus' Name let us not give haphazardly, but rather worshipfully to our Saviour. These gifts are then used where the need is greatest in the extension of His Kingdom.

Christmas, the coming of the new born Saviour, is above all the Annual Amnesty offer of the Father Almighty to a lost mankind. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn 3:16 ). The most important celebration of all is if you have accepted the new born Saviour and now you are on the way to heaven. Amen.

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/timothy-tow/how-should-we-celebrate-christmas/>

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