

# Sermon Notes

## The Method - 2Cor 5:17-21

### December 20, 2020

#### I. Introduction

- a. impossible to rank best Christmas movies of all time... way too many lists... Elf, A Christmas Carol, Wonderful Life, Rudolph, Frosty, Christmas Story, Scrooged, Home Alone, Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street, Christmas Vacation, Die Hard...
- b. Christmas is about miracles... miracle of moment... God provides at right time... Lam 3:25... "the Lord is good to those who wait for Him..." Rom 5... "Christ came at right time and died... now we're saved by His life..." 2Cor 6:2... "at right time, I heard you... right time is now... today is the day..."
- c. slow down, listen... as miracle of message reveals the Father thru Jesus... Job 36:11... "if they listen... blessed with prosperity throughout their lives..." Prov 4... "listen, pay attention... so you may gain understanding..." Matt 13:9-13... "should listen... hearing, they do not listen and understand..."
- d. ever wonder why God chose to become one of us... why this plan was best... the miracle of the method helps reveal the moment and message... pray... Isa 7:14... "Lord will give you a sign... give birth to son... call Him Immanuel..." Luke 2... "this will be sign... find baby wrapped in cloth, lying in manger..." Eph 1:5-7 TLB... "God's unchanging plan was to adopt us by sending Jesus..."

5 days till Christmas. 120 hours. 7,200 minutes. 432,000 seconds.

#### II. The Method

- a. what's your method in buying gifts... some start in June... others next week... method... means or procedure to accomplish something...
- b. when we don't understand something, but it works... there's a *method to our madness*... in God's case... there was a method to His love... John 3:16-36... "God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son..." kosmos... *ungodly multitude, men alienated from God, hostile to the cause of Christ...* 1John 4:7-19... "God's love was revealed... sent His Son so we might live... love consists in this... He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins..." hilasmos... *that by which it becomes consistent with His character to pardon and bless the sinner; renders it consistent for God to exercise His love towards sinners; literally means to make favorable; specifically includes the idea of dealing with God's wrath toward sinners...*
- c. part of Christmas is miracle of the method... doesn't make sense why God would send His beloved Son to save a stubborn bunch of sinners who didn't listen... Isa 55... "listen and find life... turn to God, He will have mercy and freely forgive... *My thoughts not your thoughts, My ways not your ways... live in joy and peace...*" Rom 11:33... "how great are God's riches and wisdom and knowledge... how impossible for us to understand His decisions and His ways..."

Who can add to Christmas? The perfect motive is love. The perfect gift is Jesus. CTB

- d. love so great... Jesus even came for people who would never love Him in return... John 3:19... "God's light came... but people loved darkness more than light..." John 15:18-25... "if the world hates you... remember that it hated me first..."
- e. what was God's response to that... He still loved them and forgave them anyway... how could we possibly understand that... it's the miracle of the method... Isa 55:8... "He will forgive generously... far beyond anything you could imagine..." 2Cor 5:19... "God was in Christ... no longer counting people's sins against them..." 1John 2:2... "He is sacrifice for our sins... not only ours... but whole world..."
- f. here's another miracle... God included people to show His love to world... Gen 12... "Abram, leave family... go to land I will show... make great nation..." Gen 45... "I am Joseph... God sent me ahead of you to preserve your life..." 1Sam 16... "anoint David, for he is the one... Spirit took control of him..." Acts 9... "Paul is My chosen instrument to take My name to the Gentiles..."
- g. but wait, miracle of the method is even more of a miracle... He included us too... John 15:16... "you did not choose Me... but I chose you... I appointed you..." Eph 1:4... "for He chose us in Him... to be holy and blameless in His sight..." 2Cor 5:17-21... "God has given us this task... He gave us this wonderful message... we are Christ's ambassadors... God is making His appeal thru us... we speak..."

Only 5% of unchurched people in America are highly resistant to the Gospel. The other 95% are far more open. Don't be afraid of sharing your faith. Sam Rainer

- h. probably not how we would have done it... in many ways, we are the miracle of the method... not about your ability as much as your availability... 1Cor 1:21-31... "God in His wisdom... used our foolish preaching to save those who believe... this foolish plan of God is wiser than the wisest of human plans... God called you... chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise... chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful... chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all..."

We don't fail in our evangelism if we present the Gospel and the person is not saved. We fail only when we don't present the Gospel at all. Mark Dever

- i. don't let devil scare you... just share Good News of what God has done in your life... not your responsibility to change anyone or anything... it's God's... Luke 8:39... "go back to your family, tell them everything God has done for you..." John 4:26-30... "woman left jar... ran to village... telling everyone about Jesus..." 1John 1:1-4... "declare what you have seen and heard... have fellowship with us..."

Perhaps we could call it contra-conditional love. Contrary to the conditions normally required to receive God's blessings... He has blessed me because His

Son fulfilled those conditions. Contrary to what I am due... He loves me. And now, I can begin to change... not to earn love, but because of love. Edward Welch

- j. *you* are the only one who can tell *your* story... to even think that God would want us to be part of the miracle of the method is a miracle in itself... but He does... so take off your shoes... despite what you may think... your feet are beautiful... pray... Rom 10:14-17... "how can they believe without hearing... how can they hear unless someone tells them... how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news..."

Advent Video #4 - Man at table listening to Mom's tapes

## The Gospel

Phil 1:27... *let your conversation be as the Gospel of Christ...*

The word **conversation** does not merely mean our talk and converse with one another, but the **whole course of our life** and behaviour in the world. The Greek word signifies the actions and the privileges of citizenship... and thus we are commanded to let our actions, as citizens of the New Jerusalem, be such as becometh the Gospel of Christ.

What sort of conversation is this? In the first place, the **Gospel is very simple**. So Christians should be simple in their habits. There should be simplicity about our manner, our speech, our dress, our whole behaviour, simplicity which is the very soul of beauty.

The **Gospel is pre-eminently true**, it is gold without dross, and the Christian's life will be lustreless and valueless without the jewel of truth. **The Gospel is fearless**. It boldly proclaims truth, whether men like it or not. We must be equally faithful and unflinching.

But the **Gospel is also very gentle**. Mark this spirit in its Founder, *a bruised reed He will not break*. Some professors are sharper than a thorn-hedge, such men are not like Jesus. Let us seek to win others by the gentleness of our words and acts.

The **Gospel is very loving**. It is the message of the God of love to a lost and fallen race. Christ's last command to His disciples was to *love one another*. O for more real, hearty union and love to all the saints; for more tender compassion towards the souls of the worst and vilest of men!

We must not forget the **Gospel of Christ is holy**. It never excuses sin. It pardons it, but only through an atonement. If our life is to resemble the Gospel, we must shun, not merely the grosser vices, but everything that would hinder our perfect conformity to Christ. For His sake, for our own sakes, and for the sakes of others, we must strive day by day to let our conversation be more in accordance with His Gospel.

**Charles Spurgeon**  
**Morning and Evening Devotional – May 24<sup>th</sup>**

## Sermon Study

The Method - **2Cor 5:17-21** - December 20, 2020

1. What's your favorite **Christmas movie**? Why?
2. What have you **learned** from the miracle of the **moment** and the miracle of the **message**? Read **Lam 3:25... Rom 5:6-11... 2Cor 6:2** and **Job 36:11... Prov 4... Matt 13:9-13**.
3. Read **John 3:16-30** and **1John 4:7-19**. Read the definition of **propitiation** (*hilasmos*). What does that say to you about **God's love**?
4. Read **John 3:19; 15:18-25**. What was God's response, even to those who **didn't love** Him? Read **Isa 55:8... 2Cor 5:19... 1John 2:2**.
5. How does it make you feel to know you are included in the **miracle of the method**? Read **John 15:16... Eph 1:4... 2Cor 5:17-21... 1Cor 1:21-31**. How should you **respond** to that?
6. Read **Luke 8:39... John 4:26-30... 1John 1:1-4**. How often do you **share** the Good News? Why do you think that is?
7. Are your **feet beautiful**? How can they be? Read **Rom 10:14-17**. Take your shoes off and share the **Good News** this Christmas!!

We don't fail in our evangelism if we present the Gospel and the person is not saved. We fail only when we don't present the Gospel at all. **Mark Dever**

## Advent Explanation

November 29, 2020

Not all of us have Christmas decorations up yet, but many do. Traditionally, Christmas stuff gets put up only after Thanksgiving... that is unless you're Walmart, and then it gets put up in late September!!

Christmas truly is the most wonderful time of the year... and with the year we've had... many are celebrating early. Advent is intended for us to slow down, take a deep breath, and remember the real reason for the season.

**Advent** means: *the coming or arrival of something or someone that is important or worthy.*

The very first mention of Advent goes back to AD 380 at the Spanish Council of Saragossa!! Even they were busy!! There's no perfect guide on how to celebrate getting ready for Jesus... so there really isn't a *right or wrong* way to have Advent in your church or your family.

Generally, the themes of Advent correspond to particular weeks.

- Week 1 - Hope
- Week 2 - Preparation
- Week 3 - Joy
- Week 4 - Love
- Week 5 - Christ

The candles remind us that Jesus is the Light of the world and He came to dispel the darkness. They are meant, in the middle of our busyness, to remind us first and foremost, that the entire Christmas season is all about Jesus. We encourage you to have your own Advent traditions at home, as well as here.

## Advent - Week 4 - Love

December 20, 2020

### READING

This is the fourth week of advent and we light the **candle of love** to remind us that God demonstrated His great love for us by sending His Son Jesus to be born in a manger, suffer and die for our sins, so we may live with Him forever. We love only because the Father deeply loved us first and showed us that love while we were still sinners.

**Light all three of the PURPLE candles, then the PINK candle, and finish by reading the Scripture below.**

### SCRIPTURE

John 3:16-19... *God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent His Son into the world, not to judge the world, but to save the world thru Him. There is no judgment against anyone who believes in Him. But anyone who does not believe in Him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son. And the judgment is based on this fact: God's light came into the world, but people loved darkness more than light, for their actions were evil.*

Alternative readings: Psa 24:1-10... Isa 7:10-14... Luke 2:8-20... 1John 4:10  
Songs: Away in a Manger; O Little Town of Bethlehem