

Home for Christmas

Matt VanCleave

December 10th, 2023

We would like your feedback!

Please answer this brief survey to help us provide you with a better small group experience!

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REVIEW LAST WEEK'S NEXT STEPS

What, if any, next step did you commit to last week, how did it go?

- I will rethink what I believe about Heaven and life after death.
- I will allow the resurrection to change the way I view and understand death.
- I will read "The Denial of Death" by Ernest Becker.

THIS WEEK'S SERMON RECAP

"Home" is a word that may fill you with nostalgia, gratitude, or it may fill you with pain. It's a funny thing about home. Home can create more joy than anything else, and home can be associated with more pain than anything else. Home is actually a difficult word to define. It's not just where you live. Home is supposed to be a place where you belong, where you're safe, and where love prevails.

But we live in a world that isn't safe, where everyone feels excluded, and where love doesn't prevail. It turns out that our longing for home is something this world cannot satisfy. We were made for a deeper home, for a better home.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) Pastor Matt said that the birthday of a god (Cesar Augustus who claimed to be divine) has marked the beginning of The Gospel, the good news for the world. So the birthday of Cesar was regarded as the beginning of The Gospel, the good news. What do you think about this?
- 2) In Hebrew, Bethlehem means "House of Bread". Jesus said, "I am the Bread of Life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." What do you think of this?

3) Pastor Matt said that home is supposed to be a place where you belong, but not everyone experienced that growing up. How did “being home for Christmas” shape your view of Jesus and the Bible growing up?

4) John 14:23 says, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.” How have you experienced this in your life?

5) Pastor Matt reminded us that in the story Jesus told of the Prodigal Son, after experiencing the consequences of running away from home the Prodigal comes to his senses and decides to come home. Share about how you’ve experienced this.

6) Shepherds in Jesus time were seen as dishonest and untrustworthy. So why do you think God chose shepherds to be the first to spread the news of Jesus birth?

7) Luke 2:10-11 says, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord.” Why do you think the initial greeting from the angels start with, “Do not be afraid?”

8) Pastor Matt shared that there are about 8 million people who live in the Bay Area and this area is one of the least church-going metropolitan areas in the country. What can you do to invite someone to our Christmas eve service?

9) Pastor Matt reminded us that God has placed people in our lives who God wants to reach through us. Who can you pray for and invite to our Christmas eve service?

10) Will you commit to praying and ask God, "God will you help me to be really bold? Would you bring names of people to my mind? If my heart has been cold or hard about this, will you make it warm and tender? Will you help me when I'm with people to think about how I could plant a seed with those people? Help me to think about how I could take a little risk with these people, how I could be a little bolder with these people.

NEXT STEPS FOR THIS WEEK (COMMIT TO GROW)

- I will pray for unchurched friends, neighbors and coworkers.
- I will ask God to open the door for me to extend an invitation.
- I will be bold about extending invitations this season.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- Luke 2:17
- Luke 2:1-4
- John 14:18
- John 14:24
- Revelation 3:20
- Luke 2:10-11
- Luke 2:15-18

Prayer Request(s)

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