

UPSIDE DOWN CHRISTMAS TITLE

Merry December everyone! Welcome to Redemption Church. We are a young passionate nondenominational church in Plano Tx and we are thrilled about the Bible, the Word of God, we are thrilled about connecting together in community, and we are thrilled that we have access to God's presence.

My name is Chris Fluitt, I am the lead pastor here at Redemption and I am pumped to kick off our new Christmas Sermon Series.

I really look forward to this time of year. I love the Christmas season. I grew up with many traditions that I loved and cherished and now I get to hand them down to my kids. That is really fun.

- The importance of family.
- The idea of giving and not just receiving.
- It's ok to sing out loud for no reason a Christmas Carol at any time or place during this season.
- The story of Jesus' birth.

But there are some traditions that have become a part of this season that we need to do away with. These are traditions that we don't need to pass down.

- Materialism, greed, waste
 - How disturbing is it that thanksgiving is being taken over by black Friday!? The real holiday is becoming black Friday... not thanksgiving. ...All for a good priced high definition television.
 - The indulgence of this season. Your kids won't just get 1 gift. They won't just get 5 gifts. There is a pressure to give to excess and indulgence. I have to think this is something being passed on to the next generation..

- There is very little thought, perhaps NO THOUGHT, to those less fortunate.
- And we are buying stuff that will be in the trash long before it is paid off our credit card. Waste and Debt.
- Nonstop Stress & surprising loneliness
 - This is one of the most stressful and busy times of year. Multiple Christmas parties every week. Trying to find time to cook, to shop, to wrap presents... 3 things I am terrible at..
 - Although there is a lot of busyness.. there is a heightened amount of depression, sadness, and loneliness. Suicide always spikes during December.
- Focused on things other than Christ. This season is supposed to be about the Nativity... the incarnation of God in flesh.. the birth of Christ.

Now there are some arguments about the creation of this holiday being an invention of the Catholic church and that it melded together some of the pagan practices... tree worship and the winter solstice. I think there are some valid points to that argument, but rest at ease. We are not preaching against your Christmas tree or the holiday season, instead we are focusing on the birth of our King.

How should we worship our King in this season?

Christmas is becoming everything it wasn't meant to be.

Instead of joy many feel afraid.

Instead of community many feel loneliness & Depression.

Instead of peace they feel stress & pressure.

Instead of sharing the love, care, & generosity of this season they are breaking their necks to celebrate Materialism & greed.

Instead of hope we feel painful regret over the past and who we lost.

Instead of experiencing Christ we are experiencing things that don't bring life.

We are not experiencing what Christ intended when He entered this world. Christmas needs to be turned upside down.

Christ came to turn the world upside down

He came to turn darkness to light, fear to love, death to life, sorrow to joy.

Has he turned your world upside down?

Colossians 2:15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.(NIV)

So how should we worship this King? How can we turn this season upside down?

Let the Holy Spirit reveal Christ

1 Corinthians 2:10 but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.(NIV)

1 Corinthians 2:12 We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.(NIV)

Your Bible says the Holy Spirit leads you into all Truth. Who is the Truth? Jesus is the way, the TRUTH, and the life. You need the Holy Spirit to lead you into the TRUTH and reveal Jesus to you.

The Holy Spirit is not talked much about during the Christmas season.. but the Holy Spirit is instrumental in the story. ..Even before the Christmas story began..

Jesus was revealed to the Prophets millennia before His birth. It was the Holy Spirit that revealed Jesus to them.

2 Peter 1:21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.(NIV)

The Holy Spirit spoke to the prophets... The Spirit said... you better grab a pen and paper and listen up..

Isaiah 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.(NIV)

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.(NIV)

Micah 5:2 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."(NIV)

Before Christ was ever born, He was being revealed by the Holy Spirit!

You want to turn your Christmas upside down? Let the Holy Spirit reveal Jesus..

The Angel told Mary that the Holy Spirit would overshadow her.

When Mary was with child she spoke with her cousin, Elizabeth who was with child also. Elizabeth's child was John the Baptist who was the forerunner who would prepare the way for messiah. When Mary greeted Elizabeth, the baby John the Baptist leapt within her.. and your Bible says that the Holy Spirit was present... it says Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She experienced and felt the Holy Spirit.

As we focus on the story of Jesus being born to save.. we should feel and experience the Holy Spirit.

...BUT WE ARE TOO BUSY. We have too much going on most of the time. Our to do list doesn't often include hearing from God's Spirit.

Here is what you should do about that...

STOP WHAT YOU ARE DOING

If you are too busy to hear the Holy Spirit, then you are too busy. You need to create space for the Spirit.

Your Bible tells you to stop and be still sometimes... to be still and know that He is God. Are you doing this? Do we EVER do this!?

All of the Nation of Israel... all of area of Nazareth... all of town of Bethlehem... was too busy! All though the messiah was in their midst... although the Holy Spirit was trying to reveal Jesus... they missed it. Only a few allowed the Holy Spirit to reveal the Messiah.

Could the Holy Spirit be trying to reveal Christ to you today and during your hectic week? Are we too busy to hear His Spirit?

Here are 2 of my favorite Christmas stories.. many people don't include them into the telling of the Christmas story, so perhaps they will be new to you. They are both found in Luke 2

Jesus had been born and his father and mother, Joseph and Mary, were taking the child to the Temple to be dedicated and consecrated to the LORD. It is while they are in the temple courts that they encounter an old man named Simeon...

Luke 2:25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.(NIV)

Luke 2:26 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ.(NIV)

Luke 2:27 Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required,(NIV)

Luke 2:28 Simeon took him in his arms and praised God

The Holy Spirit revealed Jesus to Simeon. The Spirit told him where to go. He was MOVED by the Spirit!

The difference between Simeon and everyone else just wandering around the temple court that day... the difference was the Holy Spirit had revealed Jesus!

Luke 2:36 There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage,(NIV)

Luke 2:37 and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying.(NIV)

Luke 2:38 Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.(NIV)

Anna, who was given to prayer, fasting, and relationship with God... walks up to the family and just knows that the child is the Christ. So many people walked right past... but the Spirit revealed Jesus to Anna! And Anna then becomes the first person to start revealing Jesus to others... She spoke to all who were looking for the messiah.

Are we more interested in decorating our house than in Christ being revealed to us?

Have you put more time in effort into finding the best deals and buying the presents... than in seeing Jesus in this season? Jesus is available to be seen right now... but is your mind

somewhere else. Are you in a hurry and too busy to spend a little time asking the Holy Spirit to reveal Jesus.

We are about to open this altar for a time of asking the Holy Spirit to reveal Christ to us.

I invite you to ask Jesus to turn your world upside down... to turn your fear upside down...

MUSICIAN