



Big Idea: The prospect of Christmas is saving faith in Jesus Christ.

-- Christmas demands a *Response*.

- God has orchestrated history in order to elicit from us a certain response, and people keep missing the point.
- The advent of Christ calls us to a response, yet it is not the response that engulfs our culture.
- Jesus was born so that we might believe.

-- Christmas summons us to *Belief*.

- “...that whosoever *believes* in Him shall not perish...”
- The promise not to perish applies only to those who believe (John 3:36).
 - Faith is the essential point of *Connection* between sinful people and our merciful God.
 - There are only two types of people in the whole world: Those who believe and those who don't.
 - While God's love for us in Christ is sufficient to save the whole world, it is effective only for those who believe.
- Belief in Christ alone links us to God redeeming love.

What does the Jesus mean by “believe”?

1.) Saving *Faith* is active and ongoing.

- The verb used here means to “*believe and keep on believing*” (John 20:31).
- It is a tragic mistake to view belief as the occasional acknowledgment of certain religious truths.

- The question of faith is not, "Am I habitually exercising active and ongoing belief in Christ."

2.) Saving faith is centered in *Jesus Christ*

- "...that whosoever believes **in him**..." (John 14:6)
- Saving faith means trusting in the atoning sacrifice of Christ to take bear my punishment and forgive my sin.
- To believe in Christ is to believe in the Father as well (John 12:44-45).
- God has centered the means of our salvation directly in the person and work of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12).

3.) Saving faith is an *Objective* agreement with God.

- Saving faith is not mere sentiment or emotion.
- Truth is true for everyone, not just those who believe it.
- To believe in Christ requires assent to objective facts about Him (John 17:8)

4.) Saving faith includes *Repentance*

- "...that whoever believes in him **shall not perish**..."
 - Anyone who has not repented has not believed.
 - While saving faith is rooted in objective truth, mere intellectual assent is not true faith (James 2:19).
 - To understand the Gospel is to repent of sin.
 - No one can rightly say, "Yes, Jesus died for sinners, but I myself am just fine" (1 John 1:6-10, 2 Timothy 2:19).
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- The prospect of Christmas is to believe in Christ.
 - Jesus was born so that you might believe in Him and by believing you may have life in His name.