

## Spc157 – Christmas is About Worship – Hebrews 1:6

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Christmas is about *worship*. Christmas is about worship – *today* – just as it was on that first Christmas morning *in Bethlehem*. The birth of Jesus Christ *must* be about *worship* before it's about *anything else*. More than anything else, Christmas must be about us falling to our knees and trying to grasp the *eternal significance* of God coming to us – as a baby – in such a lowly state.

The God of all creation *took on the life of humanity* in order to offer humanity *true life for eternity*. Christmas represents the greatest expression of the *unconditional love of God* the world has ever known.

And when the manger of *Bethlehem* is joined to the cross of *Golgotha* the result is God offering the free gift of eternal life to all who would receive it.

Let's pray. *Lord Jesus, would you consume us with that, Lord? We have to fight every year all of the stuff and all of the cultural marketing. All of the "happy holidays" and "stuff" Lord. We have to fight through it all and say we still are in awe. We are still brought to our knees trying to grasp your greatness and our smallness and yet your great love for us that you would become one of us so that we could ultimately live in your presence, Lord. God, we pray that you would just re-inspire the worship of Christmas in our hearts this morning. For your glory, Jesus, and in your name, amen.*

The very foundation of our Christmas celebration is *worship*. But I don't mean just singing. Singing is just one out-pouring of worship. *True worship* is an attitude of the heart, it's something that wells up from inside you. *True worship* is us being filled with *wonder and praise* for *WHO God IS* and *WHAT God has DONE* for us. It's us responding to God. It's us taking in what he has done and then us expressing it back to him. It's us giving back to God in response to what he has given us – all that he's given us.

Worship is *adoration* of the Savior of the world that was born that morning in Bethlehem. That's why we sing... *O come let us adore him . . . Christ the Lord.*

Because Christmas is about worship

### **Hebrews 1:6 (NLT)**

***6 And when he brought his supreme Son into the world, God said, "Let ALL of God's angels worship him."***

First, the NLT chooses a word here that helps us understand what “firstborn” in the Bible means. It means, “*The SUPREME Son Who has Come from God*” and Hebrews says here *The SUPREME Son, Who has Come from God – Was brought INTO THE WORLD*

And when *the SUPREME son who has come from God – had come into the world*  
Hebrews 1:6 says **ALL of God’s Angels Worshipped Him**

On that first Christmas – the day Jesus “took on” human flesh as a baby, how many angels worshipped him? *All of them*. Every single angel throughout God’s entire creation lifted their praise to worship Jesus Christ *as he was being born into our world*. ALL the angels... that’s a lot of angels.

How many is *all the angels*? Too many for the Bible to number (though God directs each one).

### **Hebrews 12:22 (NLT)**

***22 . . . you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to countless thousands of angels in a joyful gathering.***

Countless thousands of angels (too many to count) are spread across God’s entire creation and they were all worshipping at the same moment and for the same moment. *The moment of the birth – of Christ the Savior!*

In Revelation 5 John sees God’s throne in heaven and God the Father is giving the title deed of the earth *to Jesus Christ* and *as he does*, we read in Revelation 5:11-13,

### **Revelation 5:11–13 (NLT)**

***11 Then I looked again, and I heard the voices of thousands and millions of angels around the throne . . .***

***12 And they sang in a mighty chorus: “Worthy is the Lamb . . . to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing.”***

Thousands and millions of angels – far too many to count. This is the same “all the angels” who worshipped in unison on that first Christmas morning.

In the cold night air above the shepherd’s fields of Bethlehem as the shepherds watched their flocks ***Suddenly an Angel of the Lord Appeared among them*** and the glory of God lit up the countryside and the veil between heaven and earth was *lifted* and the *armies of heaven* presented themselves as a choir to the *speechless shepherds*.

**Luke 2:13–14 (NLT)**

***13 Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying,***

***14 “Glory to God in highest heaven . . .***

The armies of heaven (called the “HOST of heaven”) showed up... but they were just the tip of the iceberg of *all* the angelic worship going on throughout the universe as *all* the angels assigned to *every place* under heaven, *all* turned their full worship attention to a stable in *Bethlehem* to a baby in a *manger* – inside that stable.

Some of us have stood at those shepherd’s fields in Bethlehem. For us it was a cold and rainy morning and we stood on the edge of those fields in awe as we imagined the greatest worship event that’s ever taken place so far on this earth, taking place right there *because of* the birth of Jesus Christ.

And what about Mary, the mother of Jesus? Shortly after being told by the angel that she would bear a child who had been conceived in her by the Holy Spirit, Mary went to visit her cousin, Elizabeth and there she composed a song of praise and poured out her soul to God in worship.

At the beginning of Mary’s “song of praise” to God the first line says in Luke 1:46-47

**Luke 1:46–47 (ESV)**

***46 . . . “My soul magnifies the Lord, 47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, “My Soul, My Soul – Magnifies the Lord”***

That’s a great definition of worship. Worship is *magnifying* all that God IS. All of his *nature* and all of his *gifts* to us. To magnify something means to make it bigger. To expand it, and to explode it. Worship is *amplifying* God’s glory and his grace and worship is *awestruck reverence* for all God has done for us – in and through – Jesus Christ.

To magnify and to rejoice is about being *consumed* by the work of God. And being consumed with who God *IS*. And you know we have to fight off our culture to do that. Magnify the Lord in your heart at Christmas. Amplify the character of God at Christmas. Be in awe. Be trembling before him unable to grasp the full significance of the eternal God becoming a babe. He became as insignificant as you – that’s a correct view of ourselves. He became as insignificant as you so he could live your life – only perfectly – so that he could die in your place and pay for your sin so that he could offer you his righteousness – so that you could live with him forever in eternity.

We need to be in *awe*.

Sometimes some of our *cultural Christmas traditions* can actually kind of cloud our true worship of the savior – can't they? We're caught up in the hustle and bustle of some of the things we've come to call Christmas and we can easily begin to lose focus of the almost indescribable *eternal significance* that Christmas represents. Our vision of the true significance of that morning can easily begin to get covered up by the “culturally driven traditions” of this holiday.

For us to regain focus here is my encouragement to you. **WORSHIP**. Worship is how you regain the awe, the significance, the amazement of Christmas. When we worship, we take out all the stuff of the world. It's the antidote for that slow poisonous death of the world, of the culture watering down and watering down Christmas. Worship cuts through the haze of everything else that has been pressed into Christmas. Worship refocuses our hearts and our minds on God, and worship puts Jesus Christ back where he was on the first Christmas – at the center of our focus. It should cause us to be joyful and to respond when it happens.

When we make Christmas about worship it brings the love and the power of God back into *correct proportions*. In worship God's love and God's power become bigger and bigger and the struggles of this world become smaller and smaller.

Worship allows God's plan and God's purpose for our lives  
to take center stage  
to occupy our hearts and our minds  
and to restore our soul *AS we magnify the Lord*.

Mary worshipped as she sang her “song of praise” to Elizabeth in Luke Chapter 1 when she sang “*My Soul Magnifies the Lord . . .*”

Elizabeth worshipped in Luke Chapter 1 as the child within her (John the Baptist) leaped for joy in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and praised God for this child that was to be born to Mary.

Zechariah worshipped in Luke Chapter 1 when he said in Luke 1:68-69,

**Luke 1:68–69 (NLT)**

**68 “Praise the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has visited and redeemed his people.  
69 He has sent us a mighty Savior . . .**

And the angels worshipped – *all the angels*. We've already seen that.

And the shepherds worshipped. We read in Luke 2:20,

**Luke 2:20 (NLT)**

***20 The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen . . .***

It wasn't hard for the shepherds to worship. They had the armies of heaven leading them and when you have the armies of heaven leading you in worship – *you worship!*

But – it was hard for the Magi to worship. They didn't have it as easy as the shepherds did. They were scroll-studiers and star-studiers from far away and they had to follow their scrolls and follow their stars for hundreds and hundreds of miles through a barren and difficult desert just to get to the Christ Child in order to worship him.

Some may say, "I would be happy to walk through a difficult, barren desert if God would give me – this, this, this, this, this, this, this and then give me this, this, this this and on top of this a bunch of this." And the Magi said, "No, we are going to do this to worship. We're not going to receive, we are going to give. No matter what it takes." That's a dangerous trek from Babylon to Bethlehem – very dangerous.

And the Magi said no matter what, we've committed our lives to searching for this savior and now he's come and we are going to reach him. And when we get there, we are going to worship him and give to him, and then we're going to leave without expecting anything. They just came to give. They came to worship.

For me (next to the angels) the Magi win the "true worshipper" award in the Christmas story. Because true worship of God is the giving of my attention and my affection to him and giving my honor and praise and sacrifice to him. Worship is the giving back of myself to God who is worthy of it all. Worship is me giving back to God from *all* that he's given me. Worship acknowledges that all I have and all I am has been given to me as a blessing from God.

And so, *in response*, I give back to God honor and praise and worship in return for all that he's given me. Our worship of God completes a giving circle. God first gives *life* to us and in response we give *worship* back to him. God starts with the giving and in Christ is all that we need, it's life all together. And then when we give our worship back to him it's completing the circle – it's the only natural response to what God has done for us in his giving to us.

The Magi understood this – they knew this child was *God's gift to the world* and so in response the wise-men gave their worship – back to God.

They gave  
their *time*  
their *passion*  
their *extreme effort*  
and their *treasures* – to this Child from God

and ALL of it – was *WORSHIP*.

**Matthew 2:10–11 (NLT)**

***10 When they saw the star, they were filled with joy!***

***11 They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.***

The Magi were committed to finding Jesus (no easy task). And when they did, they *bowed down*, they *worshipped* and they gave gifts *back to him*. The natural outgrowth of worship is *giving*. How could they come into the presence of the savior and not give him a gift? Because – *worship is about giving*. And when we worship, it really is the only thing we can *genuinely give to God* that isn't his already. And our tangible giving is part of that. But I want you to see it's more than that. The Magi gave, at the purest sense, their worship, their heart. They gave their lives. And it came out in their posture, (their bowing) and their worship and their tangible giving. It is all a natural outgrowth of their worship.

And Christmas *IS* about giving. Maybe the multi-billion marketing machine of our culture has skewed the true idea of giving at Christmas and maybe we just need to be reminded.

True Christmas giving is about God giving to us a son (who is everything) and us giving back to him *our worship* in every way. This really even includes our life. If we're alive because of Christ and we give our life to Christ, it's still is the gift that he's given us that we are giving back to him. There's still this giving circle that gets completed. And so, anything we give back to him we recognize as a gift that he's already given us.

Christmas really is not about that super Cutco cutlery set they're selling on the home shopping network.

Christmas and worship *are both about* us receiving a *gift from God* then giving a gift *back to God*. Remember, us giving each other gifts is a sign, a representation of us giving something that has already been given to us. Whatever it is that God has given to us, as we give it back, it's a symbol, a representation of giving back to God, of worship.

And every time we worship Jesus *here*, we gather around *another tree*. Not a Christmas tree but the tree that was on the hill called Calvary. And around this tree are the greatest gifts ever given in all time and eternity.

Jesus Christ gave his life in *our place* so he could offer us gifts around the tree of Calvary.

*FORGIVENESS* of sin

An exchange of *RIGHTEOUSNESS*

*POWER* and *VICTORY* over sin and death and the grave

*FREEDOM* from the bondage of this world

True *JOY* and *PEACE* and *STRENGTH* and God's *WISDOM*

and most of all – *LOVE*.

The unconditional, *sacrificial love* that drove the God of Creation to be born as a baby in a manger and that drove Jesus to live a perfect life and die in our place so that we could live forever in eternity with him.

*That love* and *that gift* God has wrapped up for *YOU, personally*. And receiving it means eternal life in heaven and so much more and all you have to do is receive it.

If you will receive his gift of salvation and eternal life *then* you will be able to give Jesus the only gift you can give him – *your worship*.

### **John 1:12 (ESV)**

***12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,***

Because of the gift that Jesus gave you, which was paying the complete penalty for your sin on the cross, when you receive that gift – by faith – believing *WHO* Jesus *IS*, you become a *child of God* and God reserves a place for you in heaven. AND THEN, you can begin to give back to Jesus the only gift that you can *ever* truly give him – the gift of *worshipping him* in every area of your life. It's your focus, your attention, your adoration, your honor, your praise, your time and your effort. The direction of your life and your money and things of money. You say, "Lord, all I can do is give back to you what you've given me as an act of worship." And you complete the giving circle.

My prayer for you is that you would seek Jesus as intensely as the Magi did. That you would press through whatever desert, whatever barren land, whatever difficulty, however many miles, that you would press through to reach the presence of the Christ Child. And that you would be able to worship him with the same passion that they worshipped him with. That you would bow, that you would be in awe, that you would worship and that you would give him whatever he's first given you, that you would give back to him in a spirit of worship.

Because Christmas is about worship. And worship is about giving.

*Let's pray. Lord Jesus would you make that real to us please? Would you just sear that into our hearts. That we don't go through this season because of cultural traditions, we go through it because you first gave to us and Lord, may all of our giving be an outflow, and outcome of what you've given us. And Lord, if we've never received that only eternal priority gift, then I pray that we would now.*

*If that's you today, and you've never said, "Lord I receive your gift. I receive your gift that you left around the Calvary tree. I receive that gift." You can tell him right now, "Lord, I receive your gift of the forgiveness of my sins. I receive your righteousness to take the place of mine. And Lord I pray you would make me a child of God. That you would come into my life, that you would be my life, Lord. That you would cause me to be a worshipper, that all that I am and all that I do would be in response to all that you are and all that you've done. Lord, I thank you for saving me. For making a place in heaven for me. I pray, Lord, that you would make me more and more like the Magi, willing to go through whatever is necessary to reach you in order to worship you.*

*And we pray Lord that you would use us to spread that word in these next few days going into Christmas, that we would remind those around us that Christmas is about worship, about worshipping the only one worthy of our worship and that's you, Jesus. We pray you would be glorified in our lives and in our families and around our homes and around the tree on Christmas. In your great and magnificent name, Jesus, amen.*