

*Psalm 19:14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.*

*1 Timothy 1:2 ...Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.*

## **“Merry Dysfunctional Christmas”**

### **Sermon – Christmas Day 2006**

#### **Introduction**

Christmas Day is finally here! How do you feel? Excited? Relieved? Just enjoying the moment? I hope you can take a deep breath now and enjoy the birthday party for baby Jesus.

Today we have a beautiful service. Many of you will spend the rest of the day with family members. Some of you have been looking forward to seeing these family members for much of the year.

But what about tomorrow? Will the excitement still be there? For some of you, it may not be. While I was writing this sermon, I came across a great poem that may describe the way some of you will feel. It was written by an anonymous woman but I think even the men can relate to it.

#### **The Month After Christmas**

‘Twas the month after Christmas, and all through the house  
Nothing would fit me, not even a blouse.  
The cookies I’d nibbled, the eggnog I’d taste’  
At the holiday parties had gone to my waist.  
When I got on the scales there arose such a number!  
When I walked to the store (less a walk than a lumber).  
I’d remember the marvelous meals I’d prepare;

The gravies and the sauces and the beef nicely rare,  
The wine and the rum balls, the bread and the cheese  
And the way I never said, "No thank you, please."  
As I dressed myself in my husband's old shirt  
And I prepared again to do battle with dirt---  
I said to myself, as I only can  
"You can't spend a winter disguised as a man!"  
So--away with the last of the sour cream dip,  
Get rid of the fruit cake, every cracker and chip  
Every last bit of food that I like must be banished  
'Til all the additional ounces have vanished.  
I won't have a cookie--not even a lick.  
I'll want only to chew on a long celery stick.  
I won't have hot biscuits, or corn bread, or pie,  
I'll munch on a carrot and quietly cry.  
I'm hungry, I'm lonesome, and life is a bore---  
But isn't that what January is for?  
Unable to giggle, no longer a riot.  
Happy New Year to all and to all a good diet!

### **After Christmas Blues**

Well the tone of that poem gets a little depressing towards the end, maybe a little too depressing for Christmas Day. But it makes a point: what comes up, must come down. Some of us will come down from a Christmas high tomorrow. For some of us it will hit at another time but most people will experience a post-Christmas blues.

What do we do when our family argues on Christmas rather than getting along? What do we do when our plans don't work out the way we wish they would? Then it is time to put the Christ back into Christmas (and the after Christmas).

## Quarreling Family?

Nothing is more disappointing than dreaming about spending time with your family, using vacation time to see them, hoping for warm memories from the past and getting old quarrels that you thought ended a decade ago. But we all know this happens in families, even good, Christian families.

What does Jesus say to you when you are in this situation? Listen to Jesus' words in Luke 6:29-35.

29 If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic.

30 Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back.

31 Do to others as you would have them do to you.

32 "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them.

33 And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that.

34 And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full.

35 But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.

Do you have relatives that are ungrateful? Jesus says love them, loan to them, cut them more slack than you have done. Forgive your brother, your sister, your father, your mother, your son or your daughter. Forgive them for past hurts and stop talking about those hurts, period. Yes, it is hard to do. Yes, Jesus demands it.

## **The Perfect Family**

As a child, I loved our family's nativity scene. There is Joseph the caring provider. There is Mary the loving mother. There is the baby Jesus, the center of all that attention. It's beautiful scene and it is good that it encapsulates our ideal family but Jesus didn't come to earth to stay a baby.

Jesus knew what he was getting into when he came to earth. He knew that he would face sin and even death. His family had its conflicts. They weren't perfect (except for Jesus). He saw how people could mistreat one another. Finally, he would be beaten and mistreated all the way to the cross.

On the cross, he would die for the sins of all the families of the world. He died for your sins and the sins of your brother who beat you up as a kid. He died for your sins and those little criticisms you get from your mother or father. He died so that we can leave all that in the past and begin a new life together.

## **Conclusion**

Christmas is a time to celebrate. It is a time to celebrate the life we have together as a family with Jesus as the very center of that family. Jesus is the one who holds families together and when we follow his teachings we can become even stronger.

Maybe those old nativity scenes had it right after all: Keep Jesus at the center.

*May that peace which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.*