

“Simply Christ!”

I. **INTRO:**

- A. The best thing that come from 2008 was many people getting back to *simplicity*.
 - 1. Things that **really matter**. Cutting away things **not needed**.
 - 2. **Hard** process, but a **good** process.
 - 3. **Read:** Oddny’s letter, Partners. {Bar of Soap!}
- B. **Christmas Theme:** **Simply Christmas** (*Spend Less Give More*) brought in somewhere around 10,000.
 - 1. A **little** of ours goes such a **long way** for our Burmese friends!
- C. **The Escorcias** get the **Christmas card award** they found my Christmas theme!
 - 1. **Show card** - “**Simply Jesus**” - (Lori gets credit, not Alex)
- D. **The Stowe’s** get the **holy dog award** - for some strange reason their lil dog runs to the manger scene & only grabs baby Jesus & runs away with him.
 - 1. Karen yellin, “**Bring back baby Jesus!**”
- E. **Pray!** - Lord, we want to “*bring back baby Jesus* into...”

II. **SIMPLY CHRIST!**

- A. **Pick up baby Jesus** from home Nativity. - **Simply Christ!**
 - 1. All others were ultimately **subordinate**: Angels, Joseph, Mary, shepherds, wise men, star, animals, manger, hay,...the glory of the manger was **the Christ Child** laid in it!
 - 2. **Kelly**, looking at cards & found one with a camel going in a different direction towards a man sitting, playing a guitar. It read, “**I’m following a different star!**”
- B. Tonight as you look at your life you are either going **towards Jesus** or **away from him!**
- C. I thought to see, how can we live “*uncluttered lives*” w/“*uncluttered hearts*”?
- D. **Read:** Lk.2:8-14
- E. (12) **Lying in a manger!** - 4 familiar words. **Describe far more than a place!**
 - 1. Here is a **message** from God; a **parable** in 4 words; a **testament** in wood & straw; that contains more truth than would fit in a volume of books.
 - 2. **Picture our busiest shopping day** in our local shopping Mall...that’s what it was like in **Bethlehem**.

- a) Congested streets; homes crowded w/returning relatives(cuz of the census); Inns bursting at the seams.
- b) How would a group of **shepherds** find one child & know it was the right one?
- c) All babies would be wrapped in some kind of **cloths**; but THIS baby would be lying in an **animal trough**.
 - (1) Yes, a **stable** for a **birthing room** & a **manger** for a **crib**.
- d) Yes, the scene was **strange**, & it was intended to be!

F. **Read: Lk.2:15-20.**

- 1. They found Him. The promised **Savior, Christ the Lord**...lying in a manger.
- 2. They **hadn't** gotten **directions wrong**; It was **no fool's errand**; **no divine practical joke!**
- 3. The baby in the manger was the Great Shepherd who led these sinful men to Himself.

G. So away from the business of the city; not in some palace; not with a decorated crib; but right where He was supposed to be...**lying in a manger!**

- 1. The place where God decided to showcase His entrance into our world.

H. **Practical Application:** Next time we want to whine to the Lord about, "God you don't know what it's like to be **humiliated** like this!" Or, "God I **deserve** better than this!" Or, "Lord, do you see these **injustices** in my life?"

- 1. Maybe He'll just point U to the manger as our reminder! **Yes he does understand!**
- 2. **What we suffer involuntarily, He suffered voluntarily.**

I. God demonstrated through His incarnation, "**Love is a contact sport!**"

- 1. God had to make **contact** to make His point! (His Love)

J. **The glory of Christmas** is not a pageant or a play;

It is the *precious truth* that God desired to **draw near** to His sinful creation,

To **bind Himself** to us irrevocably & forever!

It is not a glory we **watch**;

It is one we **participate in**,

one of which **WE** are **the focus!**

K. When a **wild animal** is **stuck**(in river, or entangled in some way) any attempts to rescue it are not welcomed; the wild animal sees such attempts as a threat. **The animal kicks, bites, & does its best to hinder** the very rescue that would **save** it!

- 1. **Having you been hindering** His rescue attempts in your life?
- 2. **Have you been kicking & fighting** against it?

- L. In *The Nutcracker* ballet, in “*The March of the Wooden Soldiers*” is the tale of a **wooden soldier coming to life**:
1. When God created Adam & Eve in the Garden, he created them **truly human**.
 - a) They didn't know evil, & their thoughts & actions were perfect & completely in line with their creator.
 - b) W/o sin & corruption, they were able to live in God's presence w/o guilt.
 2. When **sin entered man's nature** we were *no longer truly human* the way God created us to be.
 3. We became a “**wooden humanity**”. On the **outside** we looked human, but **inside** we had become wooden, lifeless, less than truly human.
 4. 2000 years ago Mary delivered the first **truly human baby**...in Him there was **no wood!**
 5. Jesus **lowered** Himself, in order to **lift us up**.
 6. Jesus came to help us **rediscover** what we lost in the garden.
 7. Jesus sacrificed his perfect life, to give us a **new one**.
- M. He doesn't want to populate heaven with wooden soldiers.
1. Shed your dead wood!