The Spirit Of Christmas

Intro: While I do not cater to the preaching of special sermons, I would like to take advantage of the present state of mind to teach some greatly needed lessons.

Gal. 4:9-11 “But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? 10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. 11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.” Although most denominational churches observe December 25 religiously as the birthday of Christ, we do not advance such an idea. No doubt, many wonder why? Are we anti-Christ or Christians?

I. REASONS FOR NOT OBSERVING CHRISTMAS RELIGIOUSLY.

A. Most authorities agree that this date could not be the birthday of our Lord.
   1. It is the height of the rainy season in Judea.
   2. This fact does not coincide with the Biblical or secular account of His birth.

B. It is paganistic in origin:
   1. It is the outgrowth of the heathen observance of winter solstice as the birthday of the Sun (or sun god, Mithra).
   2. It was not observed until Liberius (the bishop of Rome) ordered December 25 to be observed as the birth of Christ in 354 A.D.

C. The main reason we do not observe Christmas religiously is there is no authority (no direct statement, implication, or example) to observe any day as the birth of Christ.
   1. Does that make it wrong?
   2. 2 John 9 “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.”
   3. He has given us everything we need religiously; 2 Pet. 1:3 “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:”
   4. The practice of anything religiously, not taught by Christ is wrong.
      a. Col. 3:17 “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”
      b. Mat. 15:9 “But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”
   5. Gal. 4:9-11 “But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? 10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. 11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.”

D. We do recognize that the birth of Christ was a great event, but we are commanded to observe His death, not birth.

E. Though the religious significance attached to this day is wrong, the characteristic spirit of this day is fine and should ever be manifest in our lives. What is that spirit?
II. **SPIRIT OF GIVING.**

A. The Christmas season is known as a time of giving.

1. Friends, relative, loved ones exchange gifts.
2. Some churches give baskets of food and packages to the poor and needy.
3. Many give liberally to the church.

B. All this is fine but why should this spirit not prevail at all times.

1. The poor are ever with us.
   a. Mat. 26:11 “For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always.”
   b. Mat. 25:31-46 “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. 41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”

2. Churches need regular contributors.
   a. 1 Cor. 16:1-2 “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. 2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.”
   b. 2 Cor. 9:6-7 “But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. 7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”

C. Actually, the spirit of giving characterizes the entire Christian life.

1. God gave His Son; John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

2. Christ gave His life.
   a. John 15:13-14 “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. 14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.”
b. Gal. 2:20 “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

c. Rev. 1:5 “And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.”

d. Christian is to give his life; Rom. 12:1-2 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

III. SPIRIT OF RECEIVING.

A. All like to receive gifts for it proves others love and are thinking of us.
   1. In receiving the gift we likewise receive the giver
   2. Needless to say, we expect and others expect appreciation to be shown for the gifts.

B. But, daily we are recipients of gifts.
   1. Gifts from God that show His love for us.
   2. When we receive them, we receive Him.
   3. Do we appreciate them?
      a. Do we show it in our prayers and in our lives?
      b. Or do we, like the Israelites, manifest ingratitude, murmuring, and complaining?
      c. 1 Cor. 10:10 “Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.”

IV. SPIRIT OF FORGIVENESS.

A. There are many examples of this spirit at this time of year.
   1. Things that would cause petty quarrels at other times of the year are lightly cast aside.
      a. Bumping into one another.
      b. Wrecks.
      c. Slight.
      d. Estranged families.
   2. Is not this a fine spirit?

B. This is the fundamental doctrine of Christianity, why then should it be lacking at other times; Mat. 18:21-36 “Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? 22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. 23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. 24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. 25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26 The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. 28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. 29 And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I
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will pay thee all. 30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the
debt. 31 So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told
unto their lord all that was done. 32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him,
O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: 33 Shouldest not
thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? 34 And his lord
was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.
35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every
one his brother their trespasses.”

V. **SPIRIT OF KINDNESS, FELLOWSHIP, AND LOVE.**
A. Parents for children and children for parents.
B. Employers for employees and vice versa.
C. Friends for friends, and even between enemies (consider truce during
times of fighting).
D. But, again why should this spirit not always prevail.

VI. **SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS.**
A. People seem to be bubbling over with happiness: singing, humming,
whistling, etc.
B. But is this not the spirit of Christianity?
1. John 14:1 “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.”
2. Phi. 4:4 “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.”

Conclusion: Do you see that the true spirit of Christmas is, in reality, the true spirit of
Christianity? For one or two weeks man tries to live up to the standards of Christ. How much
better the world because of Christianity.