

19/12/2010

重思圣诞节

圣诞节，确实是今天非常被重视的一个节庆，众所周知，无论是基督徒或非基督徒，都很自然将家里布置得五彩缤纷，参加一些圣诞倒数活动，并在圣诞期间互送礼物等等。

曾经有一回，一个老人家被邀请参加一个圣诞晚宴，一如往常，晚宴里有许多节目：交换礼物，把杯共饮，围着圣诞树唱歌，甚至晚宴“主角”圣诞老人也极受欢迎地登场。热闹非常的气氛！后来，这位老人家被邀请上台致词，他上了台后，立刻说：“So, when can we start our Christmas Dinner?”（我们什么时候可以开始这个圣诞晚宴呢？）众人顿时不解，以为这位老前辈可能老糊涂，忘了晚宴已经步入尾声，就急忙告诉他：“Sir, it actually had started long time ago and we are about to end after your speech.”（先生，其实已经开始许久了，待你致词完毕就差不多可以结束了。）这时，这位老前辈就说：“Then, this will be the funniest Christmas Dinner ever as there's nothing happened here related to Christmas itself.”（看来这个大概是可笑的一个晚宴，因为这里没有一件事情和圣诞节能扯上任何关系。）

诸位，愿老调重谈，不错，圣诞欢宴、圣诞老人、沙滩倒数、超级购物中心精美的布置、圣送礼物、收礼物等等时常和圣诞节画上等号的这些节目及活动确实完全与圣诞节不存任何的关系。有者乃后人所施行的文化，有者是一些人文地方上的传统，有者更是市场上商业化包装的结果。也因如此，圣诞的庆祝，你我需好好地思想。

圣诞的意义在于你和我罪的问题。你我及众人在世上所犯的罪，倘若人诚实地面对，我们肯定承认所犯的罪是不计其数的，当有一天你我面对那万有的创造者，宇宙的主宰——上帝时，我们如何能够逃避祂的忿怒呢？有什么理据叫祂不计算这些恶事呢？不然，圣经说到，罪的工价乃是死，人确实逃离不开如此的审判。

“神爱世人，甚至将他的独生子赐给他们，叫一切信他的，不至灭亡，反得永生。”（约3:16）圣诞节的意义就在于那位生命的创造者，也是生命的赐予者，也是生命的掌管者，祂更是生命的救赎者、拯救者。那位在永恒的上帝，至高者在第一个圣诞，卑微降生在马槽里，就是为了拯救祂所创造，如今已经堕落的罪人。神子耶稣基督的救恩已经显明，祂要进入我们的生命，教导我们，因为我们无知；掌管我们，因为我们软弱；救赎我们，因为我们有罪。圣诞的意义就大大显明于此，您愿意在这次的圣诞再次思想如此奇妙之恩吗？

Re-think the real Christmas

Christmas nowadays is a really important and well celebrated festival. We all know, whether Christian or non-Christians, many would have their homes colourfully and beautifully decorated for Christmas, would take part in some Christmas activities, and send each other Christmas gifts and so on.

Once, an elderly person was invited to a Christmas dinner party. As usual, during the party, there are many programmes: the exchange of gifts, drinking, singing around the Christmas tree, or even a big Christmas dinner. "The protagonist" Santa Claus would also appear to add on a very lively atmosphere! Later, the elderly gentleman was invited to give a speech on the stage, he went up to the stage, immediately said: "So, when can we start our Christmas Dinner?" The audience was baffled by what the old man had said. They thought the old man may be confused, forgetting the dinner had nearly come to an end, they decided to tell him: "Sir, it actually had started long time ago and we are about to end after your speech." At this time, the veteran said: "Then, this will be the funniest Christmas Dinner ever as there's nothing happened here related to Christmas itself." (It seems this is probably a ridiculous dinner, because there is not one thing that can be linked to Christmas in any way.)

Ladies and gentlemen, bear with me, yes, Christmas festivities, Santa Claus, super shopping malls decorated beautifully, giving & receiving Christmas gifts often make up what Christmas is all about. But these festive activities indeed do not bear any relation to Christmas. All these things have been imposed upon us as culture and customs, some as local traditions, some as a result of commercial packaging due to the market forces. Therefore we need to contemplate the whole point of celebrating Christmas.

Christmas is about the problems of you and me, your and my sins. All the sins of the world including yours & mine, if people face the truth, one must admit, are countless. One day you and I will have to face the creator of all things, the master of the universe - - God, how can we escape His wrath? God is just and righteous. How can He not punish people for the evil things they have committed?

As the Bible says, the wages of sin is death, so people could not escape judgments.

"God so loved the world, and even gave his only Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16) the meaning of Christmas is about the creator of life, the life giver, who is in charge of life. He is the Redeemer, the Saviour. That the eternal God, the Most High in the first Christmas, was born in a humble manger, in order to save those his hand has created, those who have now fallen in sins. Salvation in Jesus Christ the Son of God has now been revealed. He wants to enter our lives to teach us, for our ignorance; to reign over us, because we are weak; to save us, because we are guilty. The real meaning of Christmas has significantly manifested here. Would you like to once again contemplate the amazing grace Christmas has brought to each one of us?