

Why Christmas?

Let me review our Advent Journey.

First, our lives are not a random series of events; they tell a Story that has meaning. We aren't in a movie we've arrived at twenty minutes late; we are in a Sacred Romance. There really is something wonderful that draws

our heart; we are being wooed. But there is also something fearful. We face an enemy with vile intentions. Is anyone in charge? Someone strong and kind who notices us? At some point we have all answered that question "no" and gone on to live in a smaller story of our own making. But the answer is "yes"-there really is someone strong and kind who notices us. Our Story is written by God, who is more than author, he is the romantic lead in our personal dramas. He created us for himself, and now he is moving heaven and earth to restore us to his side. His wooing seems wild because he seeks to free our heart from the attachments and addictions we've chosen, thanks to the Arrows we've known.

And we-who are we, really? We are not pond scum, nor are we the lead in the story. We are the Beloved; our hearts are the most important thing about us, and our desire is wild because it is made for a wild God. We are the Beloved, and we are addicted. We've either given our heart to other lovers and can't get out of the relationships, or we've tried our best to kill desire (often with the help of others) and live lives of safe, orderly control. Either way, we play into the hands of the one who hates us. Satan is the mortal enemy of God and therefore ours as well, who comes with offers of lesser lovers, hoping to deceive us in order to destroy our heart and thus prevent our salvation or cripple our sanctification. These are the stage, the characters, and the plot in the broadest possible terms. Where do we go from here? (*The Sacred Romance*, 147-48)



*Christmas
Eve*

▶ **Love is the essence of God's nature**

“Love comes from God... for God is Love” 1 John 4:7-8

“God so love that He gave...”

▶ **Christmas awakens Love in us**

“Love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.” 1 John 4:7-8

▶ **Christmas love re-defines us**

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 1 John 4:9-8

▶ **Christmas inspires us to express God's Love**

“Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.” 1 John 4:11-12

NEW BEGINNINGS

1 John 4:7-12

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

Elizabeth Achtemeier has written that we are drawn to Christmas by “the fact that our little realms are invaded by something beyond [our] borders, the fact that there floods into our darkness a light not dependent on our tarnished glories, the fact that some Spirit of wisdom and strength and understanding whispers in our hearts that perhaps there is hope for our tattered lives also.” (“Romanticism, Reality and the Christmas Child,” quoted in *The Twentieth Century Pulpit*, Volume 2, Abingdon, 1981, pages 14-15)