*So This Is Christmas*

Murray M Cooper

First Presbyterian Church of Richland

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So, this is Christmas. What does Christmas mean to you? Is it a time for family and friends to gather together, share companionship and perhaps a grand meal? Is it a time when we share gifts with family and friends who are dear to us? Is it the day when we celebrate the birth of our Lord, Jesus the Christ? Perhaps it is all of these. But on this day as Christians, most importantly, we gather together to celebrate the birth of he who came to redeem us.

The only two gospels which contain a birth narrative are the gospels of Matthew and Luke. It is from these two gospels that much of our Christmas tradition has come. From Matthew, we find Jesus placed in the line of Davidic kings, by birthright a king himself. But not just another king, but the Messiah conceived from the Holy Spirit sent to save us from our sins. Matthew also gives us the story of the three Wise Men following the Star of Bethlehem to the baby Jesus.

From Luke, we have the story of the journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, where Jesus’ humble birth in a stable of animals is described. We hear of the angels appearing to the shepherds in the fields and proclaiming the birth of the Messiah. The shepherds go to find him of whom the angels spoke and find Mary and Joseph, with their baby son who is lying in a manger.

Much of the tradition of Christmas revolves around the birth of him who would be the Messiah. We enjoy the stories of Jesus’ humble beginnings and the holy glory surrounding him. As important as this event is to humanity and the creation, is there more to celebrate than just a birth? We must look to the Gospel of John to understand the full importance of this birth.

In the Gospel of John, we discover the astounding nature of this child born in Bethlehem. More than just a man, he is the Word of God incarnate as a human of flesh and blood. To save humanity and the creation from sin, the infinite creator God has come to dwell with us, as one of us. It is through this divine human that the invisible God reveals himself. It is through this divine human that the sins of humanity are forgiven and the promise of life eternal is given.

On this holy night, we gather not only to celebrate a birth, but to offer thanksgiving to God Almighty for his Grace which saves. We offer thanks to our God, who out of his abundant love for humanity humbled himself, becoming human himself that we might be saved. Glorifying the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we gather to celebrate a real event that occurred 2000 years ago, an event that forever changed the history of the creation.