



A WORLD IN TURMOIL, AN EXTRAORDINARY BIRTH

It is easy to think Christmas, to be in a Christmas mood as the jingle of bells and the bright decorations and twinkling lights call us to sentimentality. However, it is hard, sometimes very hard, to act Christmas in a world heading in

the wrong direction and where fear is a major concern.

Sadly, everywhere we turn, we see injustices and conflicts of all sorts: riots and protests occur daily. Ungodliness, lawlessness, criminality and violence abound. Good is being called evil and evil good. Over the years, the habits and values we once admired and respected diminished or disappeared: honesty, self-discipline, commitment, respect, mutual help, just to name a few. Faith in God is almost gone.

Jesus's message made a power impact on the world, on all fronts of life. Christianity is not a soft religion, but a tough faith to live and act on, especially in a crazy upside down world where evil is prevalent.

I. Jesus calls us to make a difference in the world. How can we do that concretely? Slow down and take time for others. Listen to them and try to understand them with a compassionate heart. Smile at someone. Speak positive words of greetings. Hug someone instead of ignoring him or her. Build bridges instead of walls. Be quick to love and slow to judge. Help the poor. Always do your best to be a peacemaker and a peacekeeper, wherever you are. You can add to that list, of course. Change the world around you, make it better, at your level.

II. Jesus impacts individuals. Yes, Jesus came to impact society, but He does it one person at a time. You matter to God. When I read the Bible, I am impressed with the individual attention Jesus gave to individuals. He talked one on one with people such as Nicodemus, Philip, Nathanael, Mary, Martha, an invalid at Bethesda, a leper on the road, a blind man on the wayside, and many more. You never will be lost in the crowd. He knows you individually. The Bible says each individual is known so intimately that even the number of hairs on our heads are numbered. So whatever you are going through, God will help you individually. Break down the walls and be open to Him. Read His Word, pray and listen.

III. Jesus impacts spiritually. The bottom line of Christmas is a new life and a new beginning. Probably the most quoted verse in the Bible is John 3:16 with good reason. "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."

The spiritual impact is a divine love that reaches down to us, in the midst of our confused and fallen world, lasting for eternity, to all who believe and accept His love. When you look at the Nativity scene this Christmas, be reminded of why He came. It truly is an extraordinary birth.

Merry CHRISTmas!

