



"How was your Christmas?"

I know I'm not the only one who got asked this question!

Before I get to the answer, I have a little story to share:

On one Christmas break from seminary we were visiting my parents. Violet and I went to the nursing home in town to see some folks I knew when I was growing up.

We hadn't gone to see Mary St. John, but just like the prophetess Anna did when Mary and Joseph brought Jesus into the temple to dedicate Him, Mary "came up to us at that very moment" and we began visiting. Mary was the wife of the mechanic that my dad "turned wrenches with" for some thirty years.

I don't remember exactly what I said, but it must've been something along the lines of *"How was your Christmas, Mary? Did you have any special meals or gifts?"* But I definitely remember word-for-word Mary's response: Mary stopped smiling and looked me in the eye, *"David! You of all people should know Christmas isn't about food. It isn't about presents. It's about Jesus!"*

Wow! What a reminder! It's so easy to get caught up in the trappings of Christmas that we miss the point of it all. Oh, we "know" that 'Jesus is the Reason for the Season,' but when someone asks "How was your Christmas?" - and they almost always do - and we mention family or food or gifts or travel and not Jesus, well, we miss a prime opportunity to point people to Jesus!

God tells us in 1 Peter 3:15 **"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have..."** So, what can you be prepared to say when someone asks "How was your Christmas?"

Here's a suggestion: **Tell them of something you did during the Christmas season that reminded you of something about Jesus.** (You can also tell them about food, family and gifts.)

For example:

"Family came home and we went to a Candlelight Service. And the pastor showed this hilarious video about a little girl in a Christmas program who took the 'Jesus' doll out of the manger and wouldn't let "Mary" put it back - even when "Mary" put her in a headlock. The pastor said we should learn from that little girl and not leave Jesus in the manger, but take Him with us."

Or maybe,

"We went to a Christmas program that the kids put on, and I learned something I didn't know. That holly is a symbol of Jesus. The leaves remind us of the thorny crown and the red berry reminds of the blood he shed on the cross when He grew up."

Or,

"It was good. Family was home. I got a cool gift. We ate oysters - and didn't die. AND we went to a

Candlelight service. It's my favorite service of the year." And when they ask "why?" (and some of them will) you can add: "Because it reminds me that Jesus is the Light who shines the way for me in dark times."

Or,

"It was a pretty quiet Christmas. Watched some shows. And I noticed something new when I watched "Charlie Brown Christmas for the 10th time: When Linus recited the angel's message: "Fear not..." he dropped the security blanket that he held tight the rest of the show. It was obviously designed to show that Jesus' coming takes away our fears.

Or even simpler,

"We went to a Candlelight service, and I was reminded _____. (you fill in the blank.)

Christmas may be the one time of year when people are open to hearing you say something about Jesus. (They know it's about Him too!) So, what reminded you of some truth about Jesus this Christmas?"

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net