

"The Stories We Tell and the Savior We Seek"

December 22, 2024

INTRO ...Christmas Spin-offs

... **a Plot that RESONATES with us** ... "Life- Experience" ... "Life-Responses" ... "Life-Solution"

"Christmas Story" (Recipe)

Life Experiences ("Ingredients")

Not Belonging: Alienation,
questioned, rejection,
marginalized, distanced

Internal Exp.: Self-conscious,
self-questioning, insecure,
self-hatred, self-pity

Life Responses ("Cooking")

Withdrawal, distance, feel
vulnerable, wounded, seek
belonging

- > Fearful
- > Angry



THE Christmas Story

Isaiah 9:1-6 ¹ But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

² The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.

³ You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil.

⁴ For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

⁵ For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

THE SETTING

THE CAST ...

Matt 1:18-19 ¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

...What kind of "Life-Experience" was this?

Lk 2:1 "In those days a decree went out from Cesar Augustus that all the world should be registered"

...What kind of "Life-exp." was this?

Matt 2:16 Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men.

...What kind of "life-experience"?

Lk 2:8 "And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night."

...What kind of "life-experience did they have?"

THE RESOLVE in the PLOT ...the "Life-Solution"

Luke 2:10-14 ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

...v. 11 ... "A SAVIOR"!!!

...But Be Careful! ...What is it that You are Seeking to be Saved From?

...with Christmas – We Might Be "SO Close" but Miss the Point! ...Might This Baby Born in a Manger be coming to solve a Problem that We Don't Think is As Big a Deal as Some Other Problems in Our World??!!

- **The Jewish People of Jesus Day did this!**

Jn 1:12 "He came to his own and his own did not receive him"

- **The Disciples had a Problem with this!**

Matt 20:21 She said to him, "Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.";

Acts 1:6 "*is it now that you'll restore the kingdom to Israel?*"

It's Christmas 2024! ...What "Life-Problem" are you in touch with? What aspect of human need, human struggle, human hurt, human suffering are you MOST Paying Attention to? ...Can you consider this—It May Be That MY Understanding of "NEED/PROBLEM" is What's Causing Me to MISS OUT on Jesus! (Just like Herod, Judas Iscariot, and the crowds that cried out, 'Crucify Him'!!!)

The Christmas Story's "LIFE SOLUTION"

2Cor 5:17-21 ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

v. 17 ...Did Rudolf or the Grinch know this? ...They needed MORE than for the people around them to Change! THEY were in need of INNER Change!!

...Did Rudolf or the Grinch know ...that they didn't just need to be "Saved" from Other People ...They Needed to be Saved From THEMSELVES! ...Do I Know That? Do YOU?

v. 18-21 ...WHAT Specifically Does This Savior Need to Do For Us? ...All of Us!

"RECONCILIATION to GOD" ...with ALL That This Brings to Our Existence!

...THIS is how God solves our "LIFE-PROBLEM" of BELONGING!!