

Every year someone is bound to comment on the hectic and stress of the Christmas season. Someone will observe the misplaced emphasis during a holiday season called Christmas – a time in which Christ is given so little place. We need to remember the real meaning of Christmas and the effect on our daily living which it should have. Four facts can be highlighted from today's Scripture passages.

1. **We are commanded to have the same attitude that Jesus Christ had** (Phil 2:5).
The attitude, which is literally a strong command, is explained in the preceding 3 verses (2:2-4).
 - a. *having the same love*
 - b. *being one in spirit and purpose*: It is actually one word, meaning “harmony”, from which we get our English word “symphony”.
 - c. *doing nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility considering others better than yourselves*: Instead of thinking and acting in a way to get what we want, or which says, “I am better than everyone else”, we need to think and act in a way that says, others are more important than I am.
 - d. *each of you looking out not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others*: If we think that others are more important, we will be concerned to help them get what they need.
2. **The birth of Christ demonstrated His attitude** (Phil 2:6ff).
Jesus existed as God from eternity past. He had glory and power that all heaven could see. But he came to earth in the form of a human baby.
 - a. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a small town. It was not the place to be born if you wanted to appear important.
 - b. Jesus was born in a dirty, smelly stable – not the place to be born if thinking of oneself.
 - c. The baby Jesus had only “swaddling” clothes.
 - d. The first visitors were shepherds, not very important people, and not the type to be the first to visit the birth of a king.
 Jesus chose a humble birth, like that which a servant might have.
3. **The attitude of Christ is demonstrated ultimately in His death** (Phil 2:8).
 - a. The manner of His death demonstrated this attitude: he was killed, executed like a criminal by being crucified. It was physically painful, humiliating, and undeserved. But it was the will of His Father and so He obeyed God.
 - b. The spiritual function of His death demonstrated this attitude even more: Our sins were placed on Him. God the Father treated Jesus like a guilty sinner, like the guilty sinners which we are. We sinned and deserved punishment. The death of Jesus was a sacrifice. His death in place of ours. Jesus thought of us. Nothing outside of Jesus forced Him to do what He did. But in His great love for us, He was willing to die so that we could live.
4. **The death of Christ gives real meaning to Christmas.**
This was the announcement by the angels to the Shepherds. “Today ... a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord.” It was not just a birth. It was not even just the incarnation – God becoming man – although that was marvelous. It was the birth of a Savior. Here is the real meaning of Christmas: a **Savior** was born.

A Savior implies that we need to be saved from something. Without a Savior we have a problem. We have rebelled against God. We have all gone our own way and not sought God and what He wanted. As a result we are separated from God and under His judgment. Eternal punishment is waiting.

The death of Christ is the punishment for sin. It is applied to us when we simply accept that truth. Christ becomes my Savior when I do that.

The ugly attitudes which we sometimes have toward one another is the work of sin in our lives. Without Christ as our Savior we will never have victory over these attitudes.

We were commanded to have the attitude which was in Jesus. But we can only have His attitude, when we have Him. We need a Savior from the penalty of sin and from the power of sin in our lives. And we have a Savior, born 2,000 years ago, Jesus Christ the Lord.

In Christ God has made available the power to have that same attitude which was in Christ.