



## \*MILK, COOKIES, AND THE MOST AMAZING PRESENT

**Biblical Text: John 1:1-5, 10-14**

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\*Thanks Sarah. I love that song and its message. It's all real. Christmas, is real.

\*From last Sunday's bitter cold morning, to \*Christmas Eve's Silent Night (in three services) last night, to this morning – we are here because of Christmas. We believe.

It's Christmas Day. Christ is born. And He is real. The Word became flesh. John 1:14 says, \* *"The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory..."*

And more than that, He is with us. He is here today. Matthew 1:23 tells us that that Christ His names is Emmanuel. \* *"Behold, a virgin will conceive and bear a son, and they will call his name Emmanuel, which means 'God with us.'"*

**That's the heart of Christmas.**

Much of what we experience at Christmas will simply not last the day! Like the wrapping that surrounded our presents. \*It now lies in heaps on the floor - or at my house it is sorted into reusable and recyclable stacks!

**The batteries in many Christmas toys will not last the day!** (*Proving that those great \*energizer bunny ads are JUST a little overstated!*) And likely batteries will not be the only thing that has run down by the time we reach evening tonight!

\*But the best part about the gifts of Christmas is that behind the gifts, from the coolest ones we will ever receive to the most practical gifts ever invented that everyone can use, but no one wants to get for Christmas – \*underwear or \*socks. (*Yes, a pastor just said underwear in Church, go ahead report me to the bishop...*)

\*Just like your mother taught you, **it actually is** the thought that counts, and the love behind the gift. **Love is, in fact, the gift.**

\*And it's all for love that we celebrate Christmas. God's love come to earth.

Just like Christmas, though, that love becomes most real, the word becomes flesh, when it is wrapped up in human form. And I found that out a long time ago.

\*Christmas at my house was a “big deal,” when I was growing up in Kansas City. I have lots of childhood memories.

- \*I remember putting out cookies for Santa, and sneaking one off the plate.
- \*I remember hard candy in our Christmas stockings. Oh, and I remember squat little sour oranges that were really tangerines! Not my favorite. \*
- I remember that every Christmas morning, we children waited for what seemed like an eternity, while Mom and Dad struggled to wake up. Finally my brother, sister and I would be allowed to come down the stairs. \*And it was magic!
- \*It wasn't until years had gone by and I became a parent myself that I understood why parents are so hard to wake up on Christmas morning!
- Many years ago, the last time we visited my mother's home for the holidays, she said, \* *“I wish we could have done more for you kids at Christmas.”*
- \*I knew what she meant. My dad’s first heart surgery was when I was in Kindergarten. And holidays and health concerns always seemed to fall together.
- But I told her, *“Mom, you don't understand -- I can't remember a bad Christmas! You and dad made it real for \*three very happy kids!”*
- I was a grown man, years before that, when I found out the \*big mysterious box that arrived in the mail every year around Christmas, came from one of Santa’s best helpers, “Uncle Fletch,” not actually an uncle at all, but a lifelong bachelor friend of my parents. He never missed a year helping Santa make Christmas real for three kids, though not his own, whom he loved very much.

\*That’s our job – to make Christmas real. For us. For our kids. For one another.

For those who are forgotten. For the loveable, and unlovable. And for the world. To “incarnate” the love of God. To bring it alive. To let it dwell in us and among us.

\*Let us pray.

(Sharing our Christmas stories and memories will follow.)