

“Love is an Open Door”

Christmas Connection Video...

There can be a real struggle to connect Christmas to the baby Jesus & then Him with the boy Jesus.. He's also the teacher Jesus, the healer, the table turner, wind calmer, foot washer, cross bearer, crucified Jesus, the missing in action in the tomb, the through the door walker, risen on a throne sitter, in our hearts Jesus, & **returning soon Jesus!**

Maybe you struggle to make the Christmas connection like the guy in the video, maybe you're just a little unsure sometimes how the baby Jesus fits into everyday life... you're not alone.

Can I just state the obvious? Christmas is so much more than we can possibly grasp through just presents, trees and red suits & wreaths... I mean, we're supposed to celebrate the *birth* of Christ, Jesus is the true gift from God!

... but **Christmas is even bigger** than a birthday...

His birth was just the *beginning* of the celebration of creation. Yes, He lived a life of love & humility, while dwelling a world of depravity. He was a great example and servant... But **Christmas is bigger** than that.

Jesus birth was etched in history because of what He *did* for humanity. He was **born to die** in the place of you and me, on a the cross of Calvary. But the depth of **Christmas was even bigger** than all that!

The significance of Jesus' birth was actually *bigger* than the sum of all His actions.... which was no small accomplishment either!

It was **why** he would do all this that the meaning of Christmas is revealed! So, why did God send His only Son for humanity?

LOVE. The arrival of baby Jesus, **opened the door to love**, this is why we celebrate... Christ coming, Christ-mas **opened the door to love** and relationship between the Father God and Humanity. God gave us Christmas... because He loves us.

Title “**Love is an open door**”!

If that is true, it begs the question, why was the door closed in the first place? If that door was once open, why did it ever close ? I thought God was loving, kind, patient....How could this happened...?

1. A closed door...

Man was made to have closeness and intimacy with the Lord. God designed us for fellowship, for relationship. **Why?** Simply because He loves us. God doesn't need us, he simply loves us! Get

that? God didn't create mankind, you or me, out of a need. God's design for mankind was love...but with love comes a choice. We can choose to love Him back ... or not.

Love is gentle, kind, and love... **offers a choice**. God gave Adam and Eve, you and me, a choice. To walk in love with God, experience the goodness life has to offer, or choose another love outside of grace and relationship, to go your own way... Adam and Eve took the bait Satan strung out, & so did we.

The mankind to God relationship was ruined because we, traded love for selfish knowledge. The door to love's pleasing pastures was slammed shut... by the **arms of our own rebellion** and would remain closed

...until one day, after many promises that Love would return... Love would come back through what we call, Christmas.

2. Opened Door

Christmas, the 1st "arrival of Christ", brings with it hope, joy, reminds us of the faithfulness of Father God.

But most of all..., if you miss that God sent His *only* Son... (could you give your only son to die.... for your daughter, best friend, stranger or enemy?), ...to die for people who didn't love Him (reject, against) , gave His Son to be born (in manger not in palace), gave His Son to die and rise again...If you miss this you missed the whole point!

The reason that Christmas happened is for **LOVE**. Christmas is the proof of Love, and proof that God wants to be close to YOU! God sent His son because He loves us!.... If you miss this point, you've missed the whole point of Christmas. The arrival of Jesus **opened the door to love**, this is why we celebrate... Christ coming, Christ-mas. SO important to recognize His love for us, without it we have nothing!

1 Cor 13 1-4 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love... 2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains. 3 If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love.. I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal, if I have not love, I am nothing, I gain nothing.

Christmas love cries out, "Love is an open door". And it settles so many fears, insecurities, anxieties in our lives...if only we go to that open door

Couple in a movie...

All my life has been a series of doors in my face. And then suddenly I bump into you.

"I was thinking the same thing!" Cause, like, I've been searching my whole life to find my own place And maybe it's the party talking, or the chocolate fondue...

But with you, but with you **I found my place. I see your face And it's nothing like I've ever known before... Love is an open door**. Say goodbye to the pain of the past, we don't have to feel it anymore. Love is an open door. Life can be so much more. **With you, Love is an open door**.

John 10.9 **I am the door.** If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. (speaks of closeness to God, love!)

John 10. 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

Frozen reference is silly, but true. Before JC, life was a series of road blocks, we find ourselves searching for love in all the wrong places, coming up empty, and here comes a baby, the Christ of Love to open the door of love again! For HE is *The Door*!

... The arrival of a tiny baby in a meager manger. This wasn't any ordinary baby, it was God Himself in the flesh John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. Christmas began when Christ was born in the flesh....Love had stepped back into the world!

What did this love do? It made a way for us to be close to God again, despite our sinful nature, because He loves us... In that John 3:16 “ God so **loved** the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the **world might be saved through him.**

1 John 4.9 In *this* the **love of God** was made manifest among us, that **God sent** his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. So Christmas is love, that we may live!

Love in modern vernacular is usually describing something we feel and express through emotion. Many meanings uses,,, “I love my...” dog, an uncle, a hamburger, love our wife & kids, or an experience. The word is pretty vague.

In the greek the **word for love** is very specific. 4 words...

Storge, a general familial love, or is the kind of love you love a good rib-eye steak

Phileō, for close friends, it's a brotherly love (Philadelphia, City Of Br Lv)

Eros, is a passionate love, strong with emotion (word erotic)

Agape. stands alone in a class of love all on it's own... it's a selfless love, godly love, **the unconditional love of God**. or “charity” as it's often translated in older texts.

I like that “Charity”, it holds the reality and truth of love in its description. It isn't a fleeting feeling, it's a “do” word. Love is something we do for others despite what we may be feeling...

There are many **things we can do, to agape love**, doing dishes can show love, helping with homework, giving our time and money to others, helping with a place to stay, or.... Sometimes, it's the things we don't do that can show love also, not eating the last cookie (that is a “do”, fighting the flesh!), not reacting with a hurtful word when you know you're right but dying to yourself anyway because you **love** the person. These are some example of agape love. No greater love, laying down your life for another...

Love illustration, love in action...

A story was told of a group of American prisoners of war during **WWII**, who were made to do hard labor in a prison camp. **Each had a shovel** and would dig all day, then come in & had to turn his tool in at the end of each day.

One evening **20 prisoners** were lined up by the guard and the **shovels were counted**. The **guard counted 19** shovels and turned in rage on the **20** prisoners demanding to know **which one did not bring his shovel back**. No one responded.

The guard took out his **gun** and said that he would **shoot five men** if the guilty prisoner did not step forward. After a moment of tense silence, a 19-year-old **soldier stepped forward** with his head bowed down. The guard grabbed him, took him to the side and shot him in the head, and turned to warn the others that they better be more careful than he was.

When he left, the men counted the shovels... 17,18,19...20. Twenty! The guard had miscounted! This boy had given his life for his friends, yet hadn't done anything wrong. This is agape love! He chose death so that others might live.

Jesus said in **John 15:13, "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."** To love is to choose suffering for the sake of another.

And that is exactly why God sent Jesus on Christmas morning, to love us enough to free us from the pains of sin, by taking them upon himself, despite the fact that we didn't love Him back. King Jesus willingly was delivered in a manger, delivered to a cross, and delivered up to heaven again...all for **Agape love**... He laid down His own life, for the sake of every single life that had come, or was to come. That is agape love!

There's a verse that speaks to agape love, and delivers a powerful message for you and me today. Agape love is mentioned 13xs in 4vs. When you hear word "love" or "beloved" it's agape love!

1 John 4:7 **Beloved**, let us **love** one another, for **love** is from God, and whoever **loves** has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not **love** does not know God, because God is **love**. 9 In this the **love** of God was made manifest among us, that **God sent his only Son** into the world, so that we might live through him. 10 In this is **love**, not that we have **loved** God but that he **loved** us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 **Beloved**, if God so **loved** us, we also ought to **love** one another.

There is a very deep, complex, profound message of agape love, that leaves us with a simple Christmas takeaway.... If God loved you when you were unlovable, and the evidence of God in you is selfless agape love, then we should **love one another** in the family of God, and then take that **unconditional love to the world**, & take it to the streets.

This agape love is only possible with the light and love of Christ inside our very hearts. You can try all you want, but no matter how you muster or force, you can never love with godly selfless love, without Christ alive inside of you. So we have Christmas, opening the door of love....

Some days I just don't see this love in the world, even though Love came down from heaven, I just doesn't seem like selfless "love is in the air".

Just because love stepped out of heaven & was made available to all the world, doesn't mean that all the world has accepted Him. And if we are honest, should be in church, even as a Christian I definitely do not display the agape love of Christ all the time.

Cookies, 7, I had 4!

In the 1st advent, arrival, God came to us in this **fallen world** through the Door which is Christ...but

3. Love is coming again, to take us home, forevermore!

It's in the 2nd coming of Jesus that love is made perfect. He doesn't bring love through a door, to a still broken world then. He brings His glorious bride, you and I, His great love, through Himself, the open door, back to heaven, where the wrongs will be righted, the tears will be wiped, the pain will be gone and grief will be forgotten.

When Jesus returns again, LOVE will take us through the open door back to perfect closeness with Christ. **Who gets to return home with Jesus?** All those who accept what He has to offer. It's only in Him, through Him, and by Him, Jesus Christ that we can pass through this Door. He says I am the way the truth and the life... no one knows the Father except THROUGH ME!

We will walk into the garden, back home again, we will finally be where Love and fellowship with God is totally unobstructed! But until then...we wait in motion.

We have a message of faith, hope, joy & Love to share with the world. Go tell someone who might just need to hear it today, that they are unconditionally loved by Jesus, no matter where they are at today, or what you did yesterday! Jesus just says, Come as You Are! I will give you rest, hope, and I will be your Door to love, for I am the door, I am your LOVE!

Spurgeon. A quote to maybe remind you of God's love for you and others this week....

"Jesus says "I am the door." This metaphor is not only simple, but it is wonderfully commonplace. He has selected this emblem, I should think, partly that it may often come before our notice. You will not go out of this place without seeing a door! You will not get into your own house without seeing a door, and when you are inside, you will not get into your parlor without seeing a door. And when you go up to bed, you must pass through a door. When you rise, tomorrow morning, and start to go out to work, you will have to open a door and when you reach your work, there is pretty sure to be another door to be entered. Doors meet your gaze almost everywhere, so our Lord Jesus Christ seems to say to you, "I will meet you wherever you are. Anywhere and everywhere, I will speak with you, and plead with you. I will make the door of every room in your house, and the door of every cupboard, too, **preach a little sermon to you**, as you shall be reminded by it that 'I am the door.'"

As you leave here today, remember at every door you come across, that Jesus made a way for love to break through the walls of our hearts, & the hearts of the ppl you encounter. He is the door to freedom, fellowship, hope, joy, and the gateway back to where we truly belong...close to God!

This is great news! What do you do with good news? You don't sit on it and keep it to yourself. That's not agape love.

Do what the shepherds did...go tell everyone, I love the song Noel, Shyla will sing tomorrow... Noel means Christmas in French, it may also stem back to root words that mean "birth" or "news". "Noel, noel, come and see what God has done, the light of the world given for us"

Luke 2. 8 And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. 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** .20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

If this is a difficult season for you this year, hang in there.

Remember Love is returning to take us home again. Stay the course regardless how bad you may feel now. Seasons come and go. God can even use your pain, sadness, sickness to remind you...that Jesus is the door, He is the gate, the One we long for. Let your light so shine before men that they see my good works of agape love, despite the poor health, despite the loss in my life, despite the hardships and consequences...and glorify God in heaven....

The love of Christ is an open Door. Are you spending time at His gate? Who are you leading to Him?