

Recapturing Christmas

Decorations

November 27, 2016 / Jeff Gunn

¹³ The Lord says:

*“These people come near to me with their mouth
and honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.*

*Their worship of me
is based on merely human rules they have been taught.*

¹⁴ *Therefore once more I will astound these people
with wonder upon wonder;
the wisdom of the wise will perish,
the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish.”*

¹⁵ *Woe to those who go to great depths
to hide their plans from the Lord,
who do their work in darkness and think,
“Who sees us? Who will know?”*

¹⁶ *You turn things upside down,
as if the potter were thought to be like the clay!
Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it,
“You did not make me”?
Can the pot say to the potter,
“You know nothing”? Isaiah 29:13-16, NIV*

Christmas is built for _____. How can we insure that
our worship does not turn into just a shiny _____?

¹³ The Lord says: *“These people come near to me with their
mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far
from me. v. 13a*

God seeks _____ worship,
not _____ worship.

- **Honest** - _____.
- **Transparent** - _____.
- **Vulnerable** - _____.

*Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have
been taught. ¹⁴ Therefore once more I will astound these people
with wonder upon wonder; the wisdom of the wise will perish,
the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish.” v. 13b-14*

God seeks _____-driven worship, not _____-
driven worship.

- **Faith in** _____.
- **Faith in God's** _____.
- **Faith in God's** _____ and _____.

¹⁵ *Woe to those who go to great depths to hide their plans from
the Lord, who do their work in darkness and think, “Who sees
us? Who will know?” v. 15*

God seeks _____ worship, not _____ worship.

¹⁶ *You turn things upside down, as if the potter were thought to
be like the clay! Shall what is formed say to the one who
formed it, “You did not make me”? Can the pot say to the
potter, “You know nothing”? v. 16*

God seeks _____ worship, not _____ worship.

²⁸ *Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be
shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with
reverence and awe, ²⁹ for our “God is a consuming fire.”
Hebrews 12:28-29, NIV*

Worship ceases to be a mere _____ when it becomes
a true outward _____ of our heart's _____.

MEMORY VERSE

¹³ *The Lord says: “These people come near to me with their
mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far
from me. Isaiah 29:13, NIV*

My next step: I will commit to a better understanding of the
worship God seeks by attending all four Sundays in this series.

What's your next step today?

Mark it on your Communication Card.



Recapturing Christmas | 11/27 – 12/3

Getting Started: What were your favorite Christmas decorations when you were growing up?

Back to Sunday:

What about the Sunday made the biggest impact on you?

What thoughts in the Sunday message convicted you?

What thoughts in the Sunday message comforted you?

Digging Deeper:

We are about to read a section of history that took place in Jerusalem just before Jesus was sentenced to death. He took aim at specific practices the leaders took part in that revealed their lack of love for God and others.

Read: Matthew 23:25-34

Verses 23-26

When cleaning a glass, why is it important to clean the inside as well as the outside?

In your own words, what truth is Jesus trying to communicate here?

How does one clean the “inside of the cup” in his/her life?

Verses 27-28

A whitewashed tomb looks good on the outside and is bad on the inside – What would be an example of a building like that today?

What is hypocrisy? Why do you think it is a huge danger especially inside the church?

Why would a person want to give the impression they were “righteous” when inside they were evil?

Read Isaiah 61:10

In this verse the imagery of a wedding is used. Why, at most weddings, is there an alignment between what is going on in the hearts of those getting married and how they “decorate” themselves on the outside?

How is the “Robe of Righteousness” that Christ gives us more than just outward decoration?

Taking it Home:

Why is it an especially hollow feeling when the way I feel inside doesn’t align with outward decorations of Christmas?

One can “Recapture Christmas” by finding joy and meaning in Christmas decorations. Take a moment to find meaning in these decorations: (This site may help <http://familycrafts.about.com/od/treeornaments/a/MeaningChristmasSymbols.htm>)

How can having uniquely Christian decorations help us recapture Christmas?

Close with Prayer: