

“Broken Ornaments” - Matthew 1:18-25
Pastor Burt Garwood – December 17, 2017

Christmas is the time when we gather in our home with family from all around the country. Our hope is that this time together is special and intimate and cheerful. But sometimes and for some of us, deep down inside, we find ourselves dreading a certain relative because of a wound or falling out in the past.

- Things weren't great for Joseph either. READ: Matthew 1:18-19. Joseph was broken at the thought of Mary being pregnant and knowing that he wasn't the father, and his relationship with Mary was on the verge of divorce.
- So, the Lord sent an angel to rebuild him. Because without the angel, how could Joseph believe Mary when she said that baby was from God? READ: Matthew 1:20-21.
- Joseph responds in faith by taking Mary as his wife. READ: Mathew 1:24.

There is another broken relationship at Christmas. It's the one between us and God.

- This might not even register with you at first, because Christmas is supposed to be the time when you can feel closest to God.
- Daily, we give in to sexual lusts, material greed, selfishness, addiction, pride and gossip...just to name a few. We do this all year long because we are sinners.

And yet God still comes to us in all our filth and disobedience. At Christmas, our holy God still shows up in spite of our sin.

- God loves you and wants you even while you remain under the influence of all these sinful things. (Romans 5:8)
- So God has entered the world through his Son Jesus to win us back and purchase our freedom from the slavery of sin and our sinful desires. That's what we celebrate at Christmas.

God's love for us broken people is so great.

- And yet this fact, that comes with eternal ramifications for our souls and the souls of our children, seems to be politely acknowledged for a brief moment before we continue with our Christmas celebrations...for what we really came for...the gifts and the food.
- And our Savior, our Redeemer sits quietly in the living room with us, largely ignored, watching us lust for more stuff.
- If we're honest with ourselves, we tend to take Jesus' birth at Christmas for granted...like it was owed us...because it's old news for those of us who grew up in the church.

Do we understand the depth of God's love for us even when we are pursuing our own lusts and greed?

- Do we understand that God wants to redeem us from this? Do we believe that he can do it?
- Do we want him to do it? Maybe this question is the hardest one of all...because sin can taste so good.

Before Michele and I had kids, we had cats. As newlyweds, we made the rookie mistake of putting beautiful glass ornaments on our Christmas tree. The very first night after the tree was decorated, we woke up in the middle of that night to a crash. The cats had climbed the tree and were batting

at the fragile glass ornaments and knocking them to the ground where they were shattering on impact into tiny slivers. It felt like a thousand shards of brightly colored glass were scattered all over the living room carpet. Our beautiful ornaments were destroyed for good.

- Each of us is like the broken ornaments. Our lives are filled with the dysfunction of sin and brokenness that hurts those around us...and we ourselves are hurting from the wounds of others.
- Before Christmas day even gets here, we are shattered and scattered all over the living room floor.
- Nobody this side of heaven knows how to put us back together again.

While ornaments were being batted to the floor, Jesus entered our world to pick up the pieces of our broken lives and make us whole again. That's the beauty of Christmas.

- The truth is this: God loves you and wants your love in return no matter how broken your life has been.
- You might be in the middle of a season of life where ornaments are shattering all around you.

Satan wants to convince you that it's over...that you can't recover, that you can't pick up the pieces. Satan wants to convince you that you're a failure and that you've disappointed God and that God wants nothing to do with you.

- But Jesus, he has come into this world to recreate and restore.
- He passionately pursues you at the cost of his own life on the cross, all so that he can win you back again.
- Broken ornaments need to find hope in Jesus. READ: Psalm 139:13-17, Matthew 5:3-12
- Brokenness is a good thing. Because broken people more easily recognize their need for a Savior.

James 4:6-7 *“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”* ⁷ *Submit yourselves, then, to God.”*

- The humble know that they need God's mercy because they know they don't deserve God's mercy...and because they can't put the pieces back together by themselves.
- Though we don't deserve it, God gives us his grace and sent his Son Jesus to show us the way home.
- Jesus came to restore broken lives and broken hearts. That is the love we celebrate and share at Christmas. We're so blown away by God's love for us, in spite of our sin, that we respond by paying it forward to those around us.