

Christmas Eve  
"What if"

How many of you like to watch the really good TV commercials?

I know there are some bad ones, but how about the clever ones, the ones that make you laugh, the ones you can still remember years later?

I can still picture a commercial I saw years ago... it was one that made you really think. It started out with a dedicated employee, trying to relax at home but it's obvious from the look on her face, that she is still trying to solve a problem from work. All of a sudden, you can see her face light up, and she's got it.

And off she dashes, to get the job done while a voice over announces:  
"Here at HP, we never stop thinking about how we can solve your business problems."  
we're always asking, "What if?"

You see, the image they wanted to leave you with was simple. They were promising to work harder, to keep thinking "outside the box" until they found a solution to your problem.

Now, what if you had someone, who dedicated every waking hour to solving your biggest worries and problems.

What if, instead of losing sleep at night, or popping TUMS or Roloids, you could just lay your head on the pillow, and be at peace knowing that someone else had it under control.

There's a big market out there for problem solvers.  
And not just for business problems.

Think about all the different people on TV or radio who specialize in solving people problems. There's Dr. Phil, and Oprah who created Dr. Phil's program, and Dr. OZ and the list goes on and on.

But you didn't come here tonight for a self-help sermon, did you?  
That's not what Christmas Eve is all about.  
And that's not what I'm here to proclaim tonight.

God has a different message for us.  
And it's the biggest "outside the box" message you will ever hear.

You see this world is constantly trying to cut God down to size  
...to limit God's power and potential in your life.

The world would love to put God in a small little box...

one so small that you wouldn't even notice it.

The world wants you to believe that God can't make any real difference in your life.

For example:

The little box the world would like to put God in is something I call the Christmas morning box.

You see if God is in a Christmas box, then all you have is a little story about a cuddly baby, that you take out once a year. It might make you feel warm inside, but it limits God.

And the Christmas box, wants to keep Jesus in a manger. But what if, the story of Jesus' birth is more than that... more than a baby born in a manger.

What if it's true !

What if it's a story that changes the world?

There's a story about Jane Fonda meeting the Archbishop of Canterbury. And the Archbishop says to Jane Fonda, "Jesus is the Son of God you know." And Jane Fonda says, "Well, he may be the Son of God to you, but he's not for me." And the Archbishop says, "Jane, he either is, or he isn't, there is no "for me" about it."

What if it's true that the Creator of the Universe, the God who made the whole earth and everything in it, what if God himself entered this world, and took on human flesh, and then walked where we walk, and suffered like we suffer?

How's that for exploding the limits of the Christmas box?

Think about that...

How does that change the way you look at your own life, your own struggles and your hurts to know that the Creator of the Universe has entered your world and wants to know you and be known by you?

What if God is not some distant, impersonal God but a God who dearly loves you ?

What if He cares about you in spite of your shortcomings in spite of your sins, and failures ?

What if his purpose in coming to earth was to serve you and save you?

Not to give us another self-help book or video,  
but to bring us from death to life!

John 3:16 proclaims: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,"

And God not only gave us his beloved Son, through his birth in Bethlehem  
But God gave His beloved Son, to die for us, so that we might have life.

John 3:16 says, God gave His beloved Son that whoever believes in Him, might not die, but have eternal life."

That's my question for you tonight.

Do you believe that?

Do you believe that God has the power to deal with any of the burdens you carry?

Do believe God can forgive any sin, in your life?

Not only can he, He does!

Thirty years after His humble birth Jesus stood before his home congregation in Nazareth.  
And slowly He unrolled the scroll from the prophet Isaiah, and read these words:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor...  
to proclaim release to the captives,  
to set free those who are downtrodden..."

Jesus then turned the scroll back and announced,  
"Today, this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

I am here to proclaim to you tonight  
that "Tonight, this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Jesus has set you free.

Jesus has come to forgive you, and heal you, and lift you up.

Jesus loves you more than you could ever know.

That's why He was born. That's why He died on the cross and rose again.  
And nothing in this world can limit the power of God in your life. Amen.