

**A Simple Christmas: Spend Less**  
**December 3, 2017**  
**Lynn Haven UMC**

**Introduction**

“In your lives you must think and act like Christ Jesus. Christ himself was like God in everything. But he did not think that being equal with God was something to be used for his own benefit. But he gave up his place with God and made himself nothing. He was born as a man and became like a servant.” Philippians 2:5-7 NCV

A simple Christmas? Have you ever experienced this phenomenon? It's almost a foreign concept these days. Candy cane wreaths and inflatable Santas are popping up in stores as early as October for goodness sake! And if that's not enough, Black Friday has somehow taken over family gatherings on Thanksgiving. Can't we just relax and enjoy some turkey before we are slapped in the face with all the mass consumerism, pretty please? What can we do about this? Well, if Christmas is truly meant to be a celebration of our newborn King, there are some things we can stop doing. Let's talk about that concept for a minute, shall we?

**Digging Deeper**

**A simple Christmas is experienced when we spend less...**

**Money, except when you should spend MORE.**

- How many times have you purchased a gift for someone for no other reason than you felt you had to have something (anything) to hand to them on Christmas morning? Purchases made without thought or sentiment, and lacking a relational experience, are quickly forgotten. And honestly, what do you think happens to these kinds of gifts? Furthermore, have you ever stopped to ask yourself, “How does this type of giving glorify Christ?” This year, let's wrap our heads around the idea of spending more on things that will yield an eternal reward. Talk about some ways you could spend more this Christmas without adding one single item to the yard sale boxes piling up in the garages of your loved ones.

**Energy on things that don't really MATTER.**

- December calendar openings have a tendency to disappear faster than a rabbit in a magic hat. Realistically, how many of those events are directly related to celebrating the birth of Christ? If you said zero, or less than 10%, perhaps it's time to take an alternate route and make your internal GPS start screaming “recalculating.” This time of year isn't meant to be so complicated. Give yourself (and your family who has to live with you!) the gift of peace this year by removing all of the unnecessary, stress filled chores and busyness that are expelling your holiday cheer like a slow, leaky tire. What are some things you could reduce or remove this year to alleviate the chaos you've dealt with in the past? Do you think cutting out things that are unrelated to Jesus will help you pause to think more about Him? Consider the message found in Matthew 25:35-40. This passage tells us a little about how we can honor Christ on the day that represents His birthday.

### **Time by yourself and more with those you love MOST.**

- More than money, the most precious commodity for many of us is our time. Are you using yours wisely? You've heard that expression, "Every day is a gift. What will you do with it?" Most people don't want things from you, they want you and your time. Have you ever felt like someone spending time with you was a gift? Think about each person on your Christmas list. What experience could you give them that would enhance your relationship in a meaningful way? This year, make your gift giving relational and build memories instead of junk piles.

### **Conclusion**

So how can we experience a Simple Christmas? Let us resolve to spend a little less— less money, less energy, and less time by ourselves...so we can spend more money, more energy, and more time on what really matters. Let us fix our eyes on celebrating our Lord and Savior who was born over 2,000 years ago so that we might be born anew through His life and sacrifice. Jesus made His desire for us abundantly clear when He so plainly uttered these words: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." (John 13:34 NIV) Sounds pretty simple, right?