

Christmas Time! It's my favorite time of the year. Lights, snow, gifts, feasts, family.

But it comes with some baggage doesn't it? Shopping, crowds, busy-ness, extra places to be – all those parties and plays which are fun, but you get it right, one more place to be. And I suppose we have to admit that the days can tend to be a little cold and grey, ya?

And when, exactly, is Christmas time anyway? The Church calendar says it hasn't even started yet. This is advent and the Christmas season is AFTER Christmas. But the big box stores don't see it that way. They have the trees up the day after Halloween, right? Most of us, I think, hold out til after thanksgiving, or til December before we break out the Christmas music and decorations though, don't we?

How long do they last in your house? Are they gone in January, or do they make it the whole 12 days of Christmas, to epiphany?

Well regardless of how long you celebrate or even if you like this time of year or not - because, lets not forget, "the most wonderful time of the year" is not all that wonderful for everyone. Whether it be seasonal depression or just the depressing reality that in a time when you are supposed to be so happy, well, maybe you

aren't, and now you have to slap on a happy face? Not a great time. The reality is, problems just don't go on hold during Christmas time. The hospitals are still open.

So is it all a sham then? Well, in some ways, yes. The commercialism certainly is.

And while there isn't anything wrong with reindeer sleighs, and decorations – I certainly love a whole lot of those things. But folks, you know as well as I, that those are not the substance of the season. And when we try to make them the giver of joy in Christmastime, well, it's no wonder so many see it as a season of people putting on phony masks to try and manufacture some joy.

Is there anything not manufactured about Christmas time? Well, here is something about time for you:

Gal 4:4-7 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

That isn't something manufactured, or commercialized. That's a promise fulfilled and a promise for you. Christmas time, is any time you remember that the Lord came to make you his own. It isn't bound to a season, it isn't bound to decorations, it isn't even bound to how you feel! You can be depressed, that's OK, because that

doesn't change the fact that Jesus came, nor does it change the fact that he came for you to die and rise to make you his own.

Christmastime is bound to the promise of God and the historical reality that he kept that promise. God came down. For you. To make you his own. And if you are his, well then, your sin is gone, nailed to a cross. And if that is the case, he died for you, then he rose for you. To win for you everlasting life in his kingdom. Yes, your Father has an inheritance for you. Forgiveness, life, and well, lets just say, it's nothing you can order online. But it is yours nonetheless and it is lasting, not just for a season, not just for a lifetime – for all time. God be praised and may his promise fulfilled in a Savior born to die and rise, give you hope and joy this Christmastime, and always.