

Everything Has Changed!

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In early July of last year, after moving to a new community, I began attending service club meetings. The major topic of business through the following weeks was the club's responsibilities for a September community festival. Come September, club members carried out the duties for which they volunteered, people enjoyed the festival, merchandise was bought and sold, and the festival was over. By Monday evening there was little indication anything had happened that weekend. A financial report to the club a week later, and on to the next topic. All the planning and work - but what really changed? Not much.

Advent preparations lead us to the festival of Jesus' birth. But what happens on December 26 when the excitement is over? Thanks be to God that the events we celebrate bring change that lasts beyond the celebrations of Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

For we do not celebrate the birth of a mere human baby - we celebrate the birth of Emmanuel, God With Us, born in human flesh to go to a cross and die. For us, for all mankind. And that changes everything. God and man are reconciled. Death loses its power. Heaven is open, hell closed for those who believe the words and work of Emmanuel. Life is no longer a random scramble toward some vague goal before death comes calling. Life is now an opportunity to use the talents and abilities God has given, in service to Him by serving others. And at the end of this life, eternal life!

If Christmas is only about sentimental traditions then there is nothing left on the 26th. As you gather again at the manger - look also beyond the manger to the cross, the empty tomb, and rejoice that everything has changed, for our Savior is born!