



## Christmas Reflection

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40th Christmas Celebration

*Bonjour tout le monde* and good evening. Greetings, my friends, colleagues, excellencies, brothers and sisters. I'm grateful for the opportunity to share a few thoughts on the meaning of Christmas.

Indeed, "the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light." And there's a tremendous reason for joy today, because of that light. Now I don't take for granted the fact that I'm Canadian. We live in a country that has been richly blessed in so many ways and it's wonderful to be able to share like we are doing in fellowship today.

History has always quoted serious challenges to humanity and our generation is no different. Many of you know the opening phrase in A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times."

Now I'm more familiar with St. Augustine's City of God. And it captures the same contrast as we find in Dickens' novel. But either way, I think that we should enjoy the best of our times, without ignoring the worst of our times

- Freshly emerging from a COVID plague that shook the world to its foundations, a major military conflict begins between Russia and Ukraine.
- While the world grapples with many economies that threaten to spiral out of control, there is a full out war in the Middle East.
- Here at home, the most prosperous generation of all time, is struggling with mental health challenges at an unprecedented rate to the tune of 20% of the population, over two years.

Many of us have had some proximity to pain and suffering, to some degree. I found that at the heart of every desire in people that I know is that desire for inner peace. Its personality may differ, but its character is the same. Inner peace is about contentment. It's about satisfaction and acceptance.

But human nature will strike out at others, sometimes without even being conscious of what we're truly seeking. And this human nature is found across time and geography.

And there are philosophies and there are systems and solutions from across the ages that have tried to solve the problem. But we haven't been and we won't be able to. Only when we go to the source, to our Creator, will we find solutions.

At a personal level, I know what it is to be disappointed by trusted people and trusted organizations. I've had my share of disillusionment at times. And yet, I am content. I have peace. And I have learned increasingly to love people, because of what Christ did for me, because of what Christ did for humanity.

You see, God loves us. And He has a wonderful plan for our lives. But because of sin and disobedience, human beings were separated from God. And so Jesus came. And He died for us, so that we could return back into a relationship with God.

So for our part, we accept the sacrifice, we turn away from our sins and we embrace this new inner relationship with Jesus. And that will give us access to promises He has for us and to eternal life after we die. That's what the facts are.

And that's the meaning of Christmas. We celebrate the birth of Jesus, God in the flesh, who loves us so much that He came to pay for our sins with His own life, and to show us how to live, so that we can have eternal life.