Knowing that we had almost a full concert lined up,
   I prepared a short message from God’s word today.
   Let’s ask God to lead us as we talk about his word.

Prayer.

Title slide

So we are talking about Getting This Christmas Right
   Last week, we talked about getting the gift giving right, and getting God’s gift to us right.

One of the other things that can go wrong at Christmas is this thing of travel.

   Let’s see. Who is traveling over 50 miles sometime this Christmas? Hands?
      Now that can go bad.
      Especially with snow storms and health issues and family issues.

Some interesting, if not useless facts about travel at Christmas ...

   Approximately 64 million Americans will travel more than 50 miles over Christmas.
      The average trip distance will be 275 miles.
      That’s how far we travel when we go east for family. Hopefully this year ...

   About half of us will make same day trips.
      For those who stay overnight, the average stay is 4 nights.
      When the average stay is over 4 nights, the homicide rate goes up.

   Only 3% of Christmas travel is international.
      Business travel drops by 60%. That’s a good thing.

   The average age of travelers goes up or down? Goes down, children & grandchildren travel
      Women travel a lot more.

   And the mode or method of travel?
      81% travel by automobile
      14% will take a plane
      5% will take a train or bus

Now, a few years ago Steve Martin and John Candy made a movie about traveling by
   planes, trains, and automobiles.
   And it was about traveling, trying to get home, for the holidays.

   It’s about this straight laced business guy, played by Steve Martin.
   And this really annoying, but increasingly lovable, guy played by John Candy.

Show clip – Planes, Trains, & Automobiles Official Trailer
So, at Christmas travel can go wrong,
    But it can also be something that we get right.

If you think about it, in the Bible *from the beginning* Christmas has included travel

**The Magi**, the wise men, followed the star on the road from the east. They **traveled** to see the newborn king.

**Mary and Joseph** **traveled** to Bethlehem for the Roman census.

**The shepherds** **traveled** from their fields to worship the Christ child.

And most importantly **the Son of God** **traveled** from heaven to earth, took on flesh, and entered into this broken sinful world.

Now, just because Jesus was born of a virgin 2000 years ago, I hope you don’t misunderstand. Jesus **did not come into existence** 2000 years ago. He **is God**, so He existed before all creation.

John’s gospel tells us how Jesus came from heaven to earth and took on flesh. It says,

**John 1**

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ...

10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ...

14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Jesus **was God**.
    He was with God in the beginning.  
    The world was made through Him.  
    All things were made through Him.

And He became flesh and made his dwelling among us. He **lived** among us.

    He made the earth and then He came to the earth.  
    He made the seas and then He came and walked on them.  
    He hung the stars and He came and walked under them.  
    He made the sun, and He came and felt its warmth on his face.

**Why did he do it?**
**Why did Jesus leave the comfort of heaven?**
**Why did Jesus travel on Christmas?**
I’m just gonna give you a few quick ideas on that to think about.

1. Jesus came to show us what God is really like.

John 1:18
No one has ever seen God, but God the Only Son, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known.

Jesus has made God known to us.
   He has shown us what God is like.
   He has shown us God’s character, his truth, his love.

Colossians 1:15
The Son is the image of the invisible God.

God is Spirit; He is invisible.
   He is other. He transcends our existence.
   So, for us to know Him, He took a form of a man to reveal himself to us and relate to us.

One time his disciples asked him to show them the Father.
   And Jesus responded.

John 14:9
Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.

   See, Jesus was not just a teacher who taught about God.
   He wasn’t just a prophet who pointed people to God.
   He wasn’t the same as Muhammad or Buddha or even Moses.
   He was and is God.
   And Jesus said you cannot know God outside of him.

   You might say I can do the God thing, but I can’t do the Jesus thing.
   But I tell you from what is clear in the Bible, you can’t know God except for through Jesus.

   Jesus said, you wanna know what God is like, look at me – that’s why He came.

Why did Jesus travel on Christmas?
2. Jesus came to show us how to live.

John 10:10
I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Jesus didn’t say, I’ve come to give you a religion.
   He said, I’ve come to show you how to live life to the fullest.
   I’ve come to show you how to live the kind of life God put you on the earth to live.
The truth is that most people don’t live life to the fullest.
  They just kind of go through the motions.
  They get up in the morning and they go to work and they make money
    Or they go to school and they spend their parents money,
    and they come home and watch TV, they go to bed.

And basically they do that over and over and over again for 60, 70, 80, maybe 90 years.
  Then they die.
  They never really experience the fullness of life.

But Jesus came to show us how to live a life full of grace and truth.
  A life of purpose and meaning.
  A life that is so much more fulfilling
    than the life that this world and its empty selfish pleasures offer.

Jesus came to show us that the secret to a full life, is not to hang on to life,
  but to give your life away.
  To empty yourself.

  That’s what he did when he took on the flesh of a man,
    He emptied himself of many of his divine attributes.
    He lived a life of sacrifice and service ... and he lived the best life ever lived.

It’s only when you start to live beyond yourself;
  it’s when you start to give yourself away,
  that you discover this principle in his kingdom, that we then really live.
  And Jesus came to show us that.

Why did Jesus travel on Christmas?
3. Jesus came to show us just how much God loves us.

  1 John 4:9-10
  This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

You know most people in this world have no real concept of how much God loves them.

  They have no idea that Christmas is not just about God taking on flesh and being born.
    It’s also about God taking on flesh and being willing to die.

    It’s about a God who is willing to stretch out his hands
      and was willing to let those hands be nailed to a cross
      to demonstrate the full scope of his love.
        To show us (hands) this is how much I love you.
John 15:13
Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

That is profound love.

But the truly amazing thing about God’s love, is that even when we were God’s enemies God laid down his life for us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. That is incredible love.

In the middle of the Planes Trains and Automobile movie we looked at the trailer from, there is a scene where Steve Martin’s character Neal finds out that John Candy’s character Del, doesn’t really have any place to go for the holidays.

We find out that his wife has died and all his family is gone and that Del has just been pretending to have someplace to go for the holidays.

Finally Del fesses up and says the truth is, I don’t have a home.

And Neal who all through the movie is just completely annoyed at this guy has some compassion and empathy for him.

So he tells Del, yeah you do have a home.
Come home with me.
Come home and we’ll be your adopted home

Now, this room is filled with Del Griffith’s.
Not in the sense that you don’t have a home,
but in the sense that at some point in our lives every single one of us was far away from home.

And the reason we were far away from home is because we had done things that had distanced us from our heavenly Father.
Wrong things, stupid things, things that had created a chasm between us and a holy God.
A god who loved us so much that He would stretch out his arms and die for us.

The Bible calls that sin.
And it says that every one of us is lost in sin.

Now, for many of us, we might not have looked lost on the outside.
To many on the outside it might have looked like we knew where we were heading.
But on the inside there was a reality that we were lost – that we had left home and we didn’t know how to get back.

In the movie, Del is a persistent one.
No matter where Neal goes, Del finds him.
Where ever Neal goes, Del turns up.
Until Janh Candy just wears down Steve Martin’s character and he just has to love him.
But that’s not the way it is with us.
   None of us pursued God liked that.
   He pursues us.

   That’s why Jesus came. That’s why Jesus traveled.
      To pursue us.
      To seek and save us.
      To show us just how much God loves us.

(Black)
Now, I have to be honest.
   If I was the one who had been in charge of this whole entrance into the world thing,
      I would have done it completely different.

First of all, I probably would not have gone with the newborn baby route.
   Too vulnerable.
   Too dependent on other human being.
      I wouldn’t have trusted in a teenage girl and her young fiancé

Second, I wouldn’t have done it at the time they did.
   I would have waited til we had satellites and world-wide communication.
      And I would have looked for maximum exposure.
      Then we would have gotten the message out quicker.
         I wouldn’t have trusted in simple shepherds

But God had a different idea.
   His primary distribution of this great news of his coming into the world was us.

   He called us to take the good news of the birth of his Son and travel with it.
   He called us to become incarnational and go into our world to share the good news.
   He called us to leave the safe confines of our world
      and risk entering into the worlds of the lives of other people –
         other people who have not yet experienced the life and the love of God that Jesus gives.

I wanna ask you a question.

   How far are you willing to travel to help someone you know and love
      to experience what you have experienced through Jesus Christ?

   How far are you willing to travel?

I’m not asking if you are willing to go to Africa or China or some far flung place in the world.
   I want to ask you a more challenging question.

Are you willing to travel across the street?
   To where your neighbor lives who has not experienced what you have experienced in JC.
Are you willing to travel across the hallway?
From your office to the office of a co-worker who has not experienced what you have experienced in JC.

I want to challenge you to do something.
Each year we have beautiful Christmas Eve services.
5:30 and 7:00pm

There are people who are willing to come to worship Christ, on Christmas Eve, come to a church gathering, who are just not willing to do it on other times in the year.

My challenge to you is this... Don’t come alone.

I’m not talking about your family.
Yeah some of us have people far from God in our family, that counts.
But I’m not just talking about coming with your kids and your husband.

You are surrounded by people in your lives that need to know how much God loves them
They need to know that God has a better life for them
They need to know that Jesus Christ is the only way to really know God.

We have an invitation card in your worship folder.
That’s not for you.
That’s for you to give someone.

I have a stack of them on the table in the lobby. Take 2 or 3 more.
Give them to a friend, a neighbor, a coworker, a family member.

On our website, you can find the same card on the homepage.
Copy and send it in an email.
Say, I’m going to 5:30 service. Wanna come with me?

Invite someone to come with you.
Invite someone to meet you here.

Travel a little to help someone else Get This Christmas Right.
Put the right kind of travel into your Christmas.
Bring someone.
Invite someone.
Tell them and lead them to where they can worship the newborn king.