

Ever since Caesar Augustus issued his decree, people have been traveling around Christmas time. Today traveling by car, bus, train, and plane. And back in that day pretty much on foot. Back then they did not pack up their suitcases to go on expensive vacations. Everyone, St. Luke tells us, was going home. “*And all went to be registered,*” he writes, “*each to his own town.*”

Now today there are some who travel to resorts and other vacation spots. But most people, just like two thousand years ago, go home for Christmas. There’s no place like home is the sentiment. Home for the holidays. Isn’t that a lyric from a Christmas song?

There’s nothing like going home for Christmas. Grown children, with their little ones, drive many miles just to be back home. And sometimes great expense is involved. But it’s worth the cost to be home for Christmas.

What does Jesus think about all this? Well, perhaps we might think: “Poor Jesus. He had to leave His home in heaven to be born in a stable for Christmas. How sad for Him.”

But actually, Jesus did go home for Christmas. Because His home, my friends, is with you. You are His family. You are Jesus’ brothers and sisters; God’s children through Holy Baptism. You are the ones He holds dear to His heart.

And He spared no expense to come home to you. You see, the cost was great. He spilled His blood on a cross. Jesus did that for you, my friends, for each one of you. You heard the angel. “*Unto you is born a Savior who is Christ the Lord.*” Unto who? The shepherds? Yes. And also you. If you need a Savior, you have one. He is Jesus Christ your Lord.

And when He came to make His home here with you on Christmas, it was not for a few days. He is Immanuel: God with us. His home is with you always because your home is with Him.

Sometimes Christians become especially sad when their loved one dies close to Christmas. But really, that loved one is simply doing what everyone wants to do. He or she is going home for Christmas. Because our true home is with Jesus in heaven. Jesus came here to make His home with you so that your home would be with Him forever.

Now I must be honest with you. Not one of us deserves that home with Him. We are all sinners, every one of us. And sinners cannot dwell with God, for He is holy. But that’s why Jesus came at Christmas. To become the sinner in your place and in mine. To spill His blood for the forgiveness of your sins. And this is why the angel says: “*Fear not!*” It’s because you have a Savior in Jesus. He saves you from your sins. In Jesus you do, and will, dwell with God.

My friends, God forgives you. Not just some of you. He forgives all of you of every sin. And all because of Jesus. Because He came home to you on Christmas. And He invites you, my friend, to make Him your home, your forever home. Amen.