

## Marley & Scrooge – Week 2 – Dec. 14, 2022

**Matthew 2** - Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, 2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. 3 When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

**Herod** – villain of the C-mas story. Killed 2d wife, Mariamne, her two sons, her brother, her grandfather, and her mother. Killed 1<sup>st</sup> born. Infants.

**Charles Dickens** gave us Scrooge. **A Christmas Story**. popular. Stage/screen

- **Scrooge** - Lionel Barrymore, Albert Finney, Patrick Stewart, George C. Scott, Bill Murray, Jim Carrey, Donald Duck & Mr. Magoo.
  - **Versions** - Looney Tunes, the Flintstones, Disney & the Muppets.
- Scrooge: villain of C-mas stories... like Herod. But **Herod never changed**

**A Christmas Carol** is another powerful **redemption story**.

**Luke 2:36-38** – a prophet, Anna, in temple. “She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. **38** Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were **looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem**.”

*We must Look backward to understand C-mas.*

- Christmas celebrates the arrival of the Redeemer; He **transforms us**.
- **Scrooge** wakes up on Christmas morning – **transformed!** He says: “*I’m quite a baby. Never mind. I don’t care. I’d rather be a baby.*”
- The joyfulness of Scrooge is a **rebirth**.
  - o No greater time than C-mas to remember “no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.” **John 3:4**.
    - Zacchaeus-like journey. Turn your life around.
    - Peter pilgrimage. No longer just a fishermen.
- Scrooge wakes up on Christmas morning a changed man, reborn.
- From “Bah, humbug” to “I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel” --- start at the beginning . . .

## **Jacob Marley** – “Marley was dead, to begin with.”

- Scrooge’s business partner. Only Mourner, Friend. Dead 7 yrs. He wore chains forged in life, “link by link, yard by yard, of his own free will.”
  - Our actions here & now have eternal consequences
  - Marley does for Scrooge what the rich man in Hades is denied
    - [Luke 16:19-31](#) – story of rich man & Lazarus
    - Send Lazarus to warn my 5 brothers. Avoid torment.
    - “If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.” – **vs. 31**
  - Scrooge is given a warning – change & save your life.
- **Our lives as Christians should be different. Changed people.**
  - Joyful, loving, and giving. Not living miserly. Rich Father.
  - **When we display radical generosity, we act like our Father.**
- Scrooge is wearing Marley’s chains & doesn’t know it.
  - Partners – answered to each name. Marley/Scrooge
  - Marley & Scrooge focused on \$. Business was all important
    - **Jesus is a chain breaker. Prophecy** tells us so:
- **Isaiah 61:1** - *“The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is upon me, for the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted and to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed.”*
  - **Jesus fulfilled 324 prophecies concerning the Messiah**
    - He came to break every chain that holds us.
    - What chains hold u? worry...anger...bitterness...fear...past
      - What prison of our own making holds us?

Three Ghosts. We see Scrooge’s problem: Bitterness / past.

- Mother died, Father abandoned him, Girlfriend left...
- Shut himself off, focused on making \$. Like Grinch, isolated.
- Invited to C-mas by Nephew Fred, declines.
  - **Jesus invites us to participate in life.** Life more abundant
  - Paul: forget what is behind, move forward to high calling
    - Covid closed us off; step out... live again.

- **Marley teaches us - Our “business is mankind”**
  - Living life - more than working \$. Earning a living/ not living life.
    - Happiness does not correlate with Wealth.
    - If your happiness depends on how much \$, never!
  - **Scrooge woke up.** Joy bubbles up; overflows. Giving. Helping.
    - **Prov. 3:27** – “Do not withhold good from those who need it, when you have the ability to help.”
- C-mas Carol is popular b/c we’re drawn to the **hope** of the story - the idea that even the **worst of people can change** if given the chance.
  - “Men’s courses will foreshadow certain ends,” Scrooge reflects at one point, “but if the courses be departed from, the ends will change.”
- **Jesus gives us the chance to change** ... and when **re-born**, the ability.
- Christmas makes redemption possible to everyone. Scrooge, Grinch.
  - We’ve all had Scrooge moments: Judgmental. Miserly. No Joy
- Change is possible. We can be a different person. Hearts open Jesus
- **Our chains can be broken.** We can live with joy, happiness, love.
  - It’s in the giving. Doing for others. Living life. Get out!

God bless us, everyone.

Stay positive. Test negative. Vaccinated.

Song of the week: CHAIN BREAKER – Gaither Vocal Band