

Jesus wanted us so much that He suffered on the cross to deal with everything that cuts us off from God. Jesus took the rottenness and wrong in each of our lives on Himself. He was paying the price of all that fractures us and separates us from God. He loved us so much that He died for us. That's why Jesus entered our messed-up world that first Christmas.

The same Jesus who died on the cross then rose from the dead three days later, defeating our greatest enemy – death. What God wants this Christmas, and every day, is that we turn from our own way, and put our trust in Jesus as our Lord. Then we receive the forgiveness and everlasting life which Jesus the Saviour purchased. The Bible says, 'For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.'

Jesus wants you and me this Christmas. Will you come to Him and trust Him as your Lord and Saviour?

*O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in;
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel.*

(From the carol 'O Little Town of Bethlehem' by Phillip Brooks)



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*All
I Want
for
Christmas*

Roger Carswell

Little did Mariah Carey imagine



that when she recorded 'All I Want for Christmas Is You' in 1994 it would go on to be the greatest-selling Christmas single of all time. She sang about her wish coming true, and it certainly did. It's estimated that she's received over \$80 million in royalties from that one song. In 2019, a UK company apparently paid her \$11 million to use the song in their advert.

All I want for Christmas ... is you, is a great thought. And it's certainly better than the hit novelty song written 50 years earlier by schoolteacher Donald Yetter Gardner, 'All I Want for Christmas Is My Two Front Teeth'!

The sentiment is somewhat different from what was announced to shepherds keeping watch over their flocks that first Christmas: 'Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you

good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find the Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.'

What do *you* really want for Christmas this year – two front teeth, a romantic relationship, a Saviour? And when Jesus, the Son of God, came into our world, to be born and laid in a manger in Bethlehem, what did God want of us?

The trouble with relationships, as with front teeth, is they don't last forever. When Jesus came into the world, He had a more lasting intention for us all.

We know that family gatherings at Christmas are often wonderful, but they can be fraught. Arguments and disagreements can be as common as the turkey dinner. Just as a Christmas cracker can be pulled apart with a bang, so can family harmony. And the reason is that

we all have an ingrained selfishness and sinfulness.

It's that which wrecks relationships, not only between individuals, but also between us and our Creator, God. But if sin separates, Jesus joins. He came to bring lost and broken people into a relationship with Himself, and with each other.

Mariah Carey wants the person she loves to be with her at Christmas – that's so much better than stockings and presents. That's what Jesus came for! He didn't come for our money or our resolutions. He knows we always fall short. He came for you and me – to buy us back and make us His very own! Jesus Himself is the biggest gift ever given. Jesus is our Emmanuel, our 'God with us'. The Son of God became human, becoming like us in every way except He never sinned. He lived a perfect life before making His way to a place called Calvary where He would be crucified.

