



Simplicity of Christmas

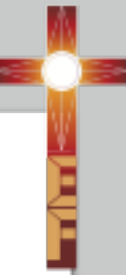
Pastor Jason Kim

Matthew 1:21-25

Dec. 25, 2022



Introduction



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Story of Capt. Gerald Coffee-

- February 3, 1966;
US Navy; Feb. 3,
1966;
- USS Kitty Hawk
aircraft was hit down
in Vietnam.



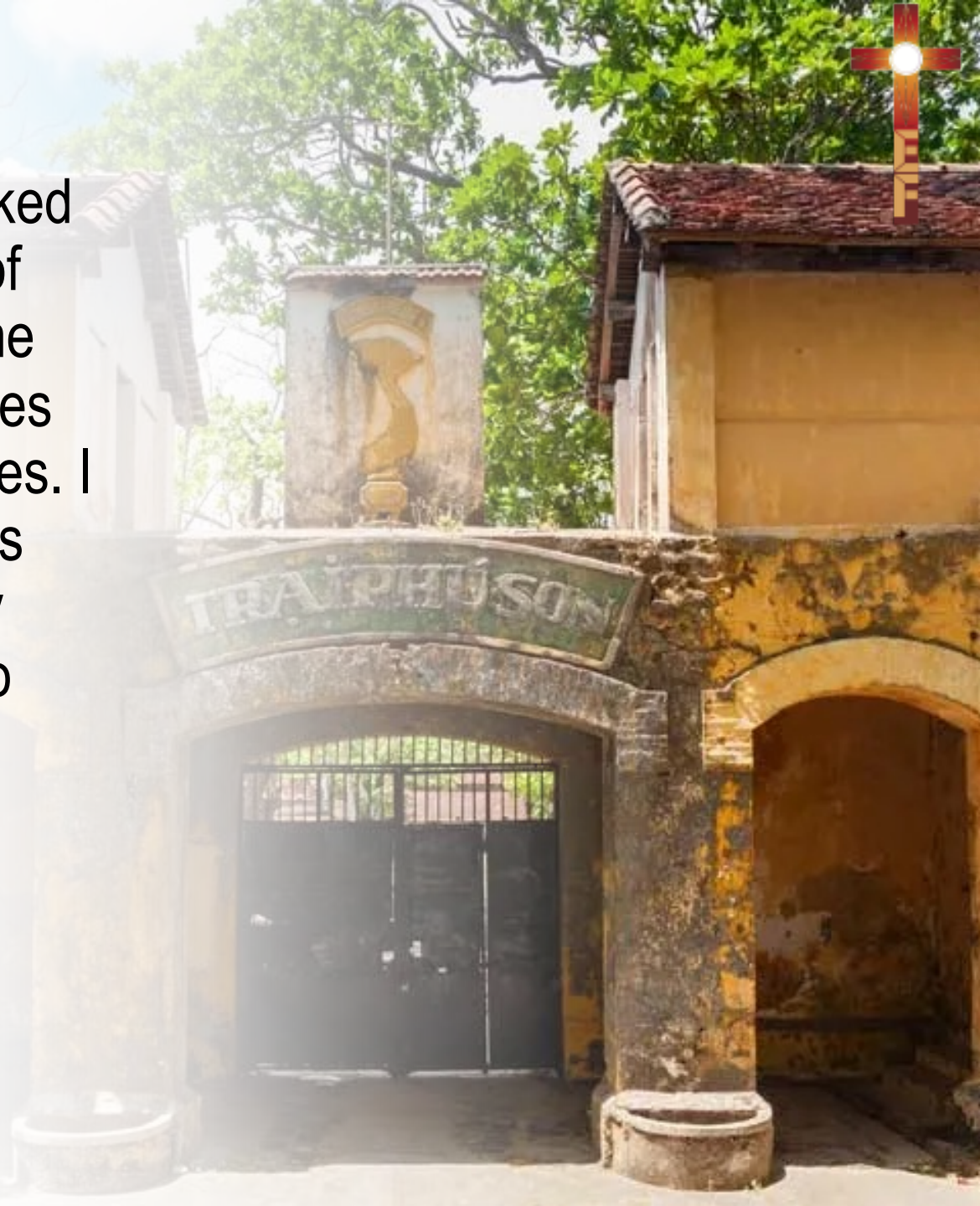


"As I came awake I sensed my surroundings more than saw them. I was in a stable. A water buffalo stood nearby with chickens scratching at his feet. I was struck by the dream-like scene, the serenity of the animals, the low bubbling of an opium pipe, the mixture of smells and finally the incongruity of my own presence. Here I was, 31 years old, a prisoner of war among people we had been bombing and strathing.

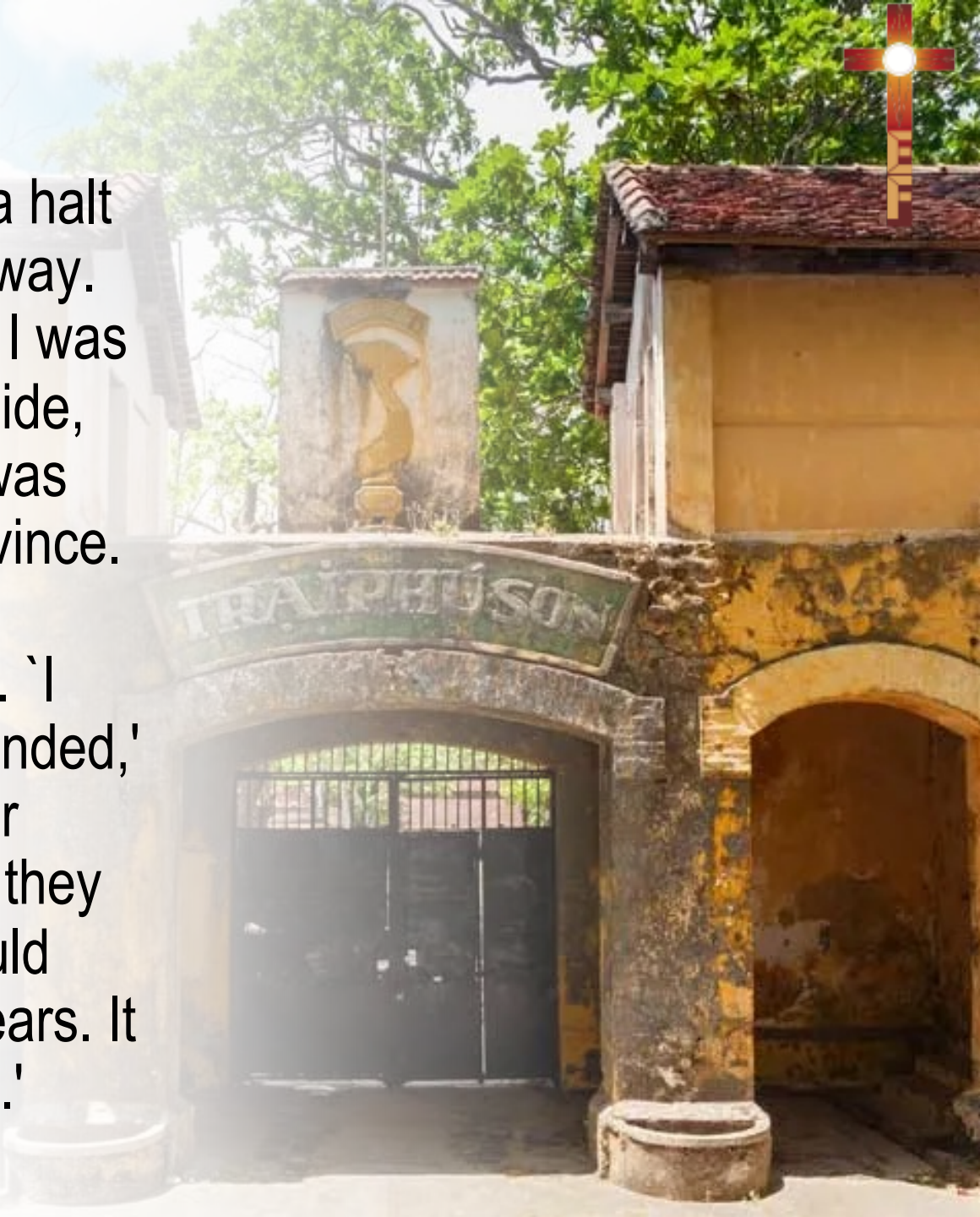


‘God, I’m going to need You a lot, please stay with me,’ I prayed. "I started to raise up on one elbow and tried without success to repress and outcry of pain. My entire body seemed to beg...don't move me again. My face, neck and both arms were blistered crimson from the rocket flames of one of my jet's ejection seats. My right forearm was broken and the elbow badly dislocated, probably shattered as well. The entire arm and shoulder were swollen to twice their normal size.

"The guards then yanked me along the mazes of the hamlet, pushing me twice into smelly ditches carrying urine and feces. I knew my open wounds were attracting deadly bacteria as I groped to regain my footing.



"Finally I was jerked to a halt in front of an open doorway. Five men sat at a table. I was told to take a place outside, opposite the man who was administrator of the province. He spoke in broken but understandable English. 'I had been caught red handed,' he began. 'And as a war criminal I had no rights, they could kill me or they could keep me in prison for years. It was,' he said, 'up to me.'





"Eventually an officer shoved me into a dark cavity of a cell about three feet wide and seven feet long. On one wall was a concrete slab, my bed. At the foot were ankle stocks, dark sweat-stained wood on the bottom and a heavy manacle that clamped down over the top.



Near the high ceiling in the back wall was a tiny window with a double row of iron bars. I craned my neck upward and all I could see were shards of broken glass embedded in the top of the prison wall. In the corner was a filthy bucket for my toilet needs, a dim light bulb revealed a curious little square patch of letters on one wall that had been white-washed over.





The tiny dungeon reeked of decades of human misery. I could smell it in the stale damp air and it permeated my skin. I was fed twice a day a bowl of soup of whatever was in season, pumpkin gourd or squash. Sometimes there would be a piece of fat the size of a quarter and it was a cause for celebration if there was a morsel of pork still attached.



There was also a bowl of rice which I swallowed without chewing because of the gravel and grit that would crunch hard on my teeth. My physical circumstances were abysmal, my clothes were filthy and ragged. I spent a lot of time in the fetal position, hunched close against myself for warmth and trying to support my arm.



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"Christmas 1968 stands out in my memory. From my cell I could hear the guards laughing and talking with their families. They were on holiday routine. For most of the day I listened as the son of a head guard, a child of three or four, played with a toy car. I could hear him revving and honking just as I had heard my own little boys on past Christmases. I heard him cry when he hurt himself some way and I heard my own children laughing and crying in my memory. I had never known what real loneliness could be.



"And then I thought about the simplicity of Christ's birth. Here there was nothing to distract me from the awesomeness of Christmas. No commercialism. No presents. Little food. I was beginning to appreciate my own spirituality because I had been stripped of everything by which I had measured my identity...rank, uniform, money, family. Yet I continued to find strength within.



And I realized that although I was hurting and lonely and scared, this might be the most significant Christmas of my life. "Seven years later on my first Sunday back at church there was a homecoming reception for me. Everyone there embraced and supported my family as their own and the occasion was highly charged, the timbre of my voice reflected that emotion. 'Faith was the key to my survival,' I told them. 'Faith in my God.'"



I. Jesus (vs.21)



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- Why name Him Jesus? “for it is He who will save His people from their sins.”



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- Why name Him Jesus? “for it is He who will save His people from their sins.”
- Hebrew name “Yeshua”. It literally means, “YHWH saves.”

II. Immanuel (vs.23)





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¹⁴ Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.

Isaiah 7:14



III. Eternal God



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- *“ For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father.”* Isaiah 9:6



III. Eternal God

- *“For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him.¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.”* Colossians 1:16-17.



IV. Christ was born as a man



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- *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being ¹⁴And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

John 1:1-3 & 14



V. Why God sent Him?



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- Jesus was born to die



Conclusion



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A. Christ understands your STRUGGLE



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- A. Christ understands your STRUGGLE
- B. Christ is best sought as a PERSON



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- A. Christ understands your STRUGGLE
- B. Christ is best sought as a PERSON
- C. Christ is knowable but not fully
UNDERSTANDABLE



Conclusion

- A. Christ understands your STRUGGLE
- B. Christ is best sought as a PERSON
- C. Christ is knowable but not fully
UNDERSTANDABLE
- D. Christ did all this to save SINNERS