

**Victory of the Lamb – Christmas at the Movies – Matthew 2:1-18 – The Grinch  
December 19, 2021 – Pastor Bill Limmer**

On December 26, 1956, a man named Ted was in the bathroom getting ready for the day. As he was standing in front of the mirror, he was reflecting on this past Christmas season and how he was thinking Christmas is too commercialized, too hectic, too busy, and too noisy. And as he was reflecting on this, he saw a reflection of himself in the mirror and he said he saw a Grinch's countenance. So, he decided to write about Christmas to discover the things he had lost. His full name is Ted Geisel, and you probably know him better as Dr. Seuss.

Today we are continuing our series Christmas at the Movies. In this series we have been looking at some of our Christmas movies under the lens of the greatest story ever told, God sending his Son in flesh and blood to be our Savior and the Savior of the world. **Today we are going to look at the movie: How the Grinch stole Christmas.** And we are going to answer **What is the cure for the Grinch in us?**

In the original version of the movie what made the Grinch dislike Christmas so much. He just did. But early in the Jim Carey version of the movie, 8 yr old Grinch loved Martha May Whovier. And he wanted to give her a special Christmas gifts but a boy in the class, who would later become the mayor on Whoville, told him "you don't stand a chance. You are eight years old and you have a beard." So the Grinch tried to shave his beard that night but he ended up nicking his face all over. The next day in class everyone makes fun of him except Martha May. He is very upset and announces he hates Christmas. And he picks up the tree and crashes it into the wall. And from that point on for a very long time he not only hated Christmas but he wanted to ruin everyone Christmas' as well. The narrator tells us: **The Grinch hated Christmas – the whole Christmas season. It could be perhaps that his shoes were too tight . . . the most likely reason of all that his heart was two sizes too small.**

Did you know there was a real Grinch who wanted to take away Christmas before it really got going? Here is the true story: Matthew 2:1-3 **After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi<sup>[a]</sup> from the east came to Jerusalem <sup>2</sup> and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."<sup>3</sup> When King**

**Herod heard this he was disturbed,** Herod the Great was an actual person in history. He was king over Judea and ruled with Roman support. Herod is well known for all the buildings he built including theaters and amphitheaters, monuments, and likely the greatest of all the Temple in Jerusalem.

But there was also the side of Herod, where his heart was at least two sizes too small. He was very jealous and insecure. He dearly loved his wife Mariamne but his sister, Salome, convinced him that Mariamne didn't love him. He was also concerned about his sons taking his throne from him so Herod murdered Mariamne, her two sons, her brother, her grandfather, and her mother.

And so when he heard that a king of Jews had been born this was a threat to his kingdom. And he had to find out where this threat was at and extinguish it. Matthew 2:7-8<sup>7</sup>**Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup>He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."** Herod gave the impression to the Magi, that he had a big heart. This was all a ploy and a scheme to hide his little heart.

As we get back to the movie, the Grinch was bent on stealing the joy and good times of Christmas. So he and his reluctant dog, Max (with reindeer horns on) went into Whoville at night and began to take all the presents, the decorations, the food, so there would only be sad Who's on Christmas Day. So he dressed up as Santa, he sleighs down the mountain and into each house he goes. **picture** At one house when he was taking the tree he was startled by Cindy Lou who got up in the middle of the night to get a drink. Little Cindy Lou Who, thinks the Grinch is Santa. **Picture** And she asks him why are you taking the tree. The Grinch makes up a story about a bulb being broken and that he was going to take it, fix and bring it back. That satisfied Cindy Lou.

Remember Herod's conversation with the Magi. He toyed with them saying he wanted to worship the newborn King. But Herod's heart was not looking to worship the newborn king, he was looking forward to murdering the newborn King and snuffing out Christmas. Here is how intent Herod was on being the ultimate Grinch. The Magi has been warned in a dream not to return to Herod and this is what happens next.

**Matthew 2:16-18** When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. <sup>17</sup> Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: <sup>18</sup> “A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.” Since he had to kill the newborn king, and since he didn’t know which one of the little baby boys was the new born king, he had the all the little boys murdered in Bethlehem and the surrounding area. Brutal and devastating. He tries to do away with Christmas.

Back in the movie as the Grinch starts to take the tree up the chimney, Cindy Lou says, "Santa, don't forget the Grinch. I know he's mean and hairy and smelly, and his hands are cold and clammy, but I think he's kinda... sweet." And the Grinch’s heart is touched by love for the first time in a long time.

And then later on Christmas morning with the Who’s shut out, no presents, no tree, no food, they gather in the city square and start singing with joy and glee. When he heard them singing the Grinch said of Christmas: **It came without ribbons. It came without tags. It came without packages, boxes or bags. And he puzzled and puzzled 'till his puzzler was sore. Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before. What if Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. What if Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more.”** (Credit Dr. Seuss in **How the Grinch Stole Christmas**) The Grinch’s heart is well it grew three sizes that day. His heart was transformed by the love of Cindy Lou and all the Who’s. And Christmas celebration became even greater! He didn’t do away with Christmas.

While Herod tried to kill Christmas that is not what happened. **When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”** <sup>14</sup> So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, <sup>15</sup> where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: **“Out of Egypt I called my son.”** And Christmas continues to this day.

And that brings us to today, not in movie, but in real life. Do you have a grinch part to your heart? Be honest.

We all have a grinch part in our heart from the beginning. When our first parents sinned that corrupted the genealogical line. Sinful parents will have sinful children. It is called original or inherited sin. And that is why when you and I were two year old our loved ones did not have to teach us to be self-centered and stingy. It comes, well, naturally to us. But our parents and loved ones did have to teach us to share. **Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things.** And we don't battle with it just as little children. The Apostle Paul, a mature Christian says this Romans 7:19 **For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.** We all have a sinful nature.

And like the Grinch when the little boy told him he didn't have a chance with Martha May. Psychologists agree that Herod's bitterness, hatred, and insecurity stemmed from something that happened to him in the past, and the same is true for us. We all have outside influences that affect us all.

What wounds are you holding on to? I know that someone here and watching online is hurt. Somebody said something to you, somebody called you something, somebody did something that they want you to keep hidden and you maybe want to keep hidden to because you feel broken or ashamed even though it was not your fault. To you, maybe it was a classmate. A coach, a relative member, or someone you didn't even know.

We all have a sinful nature grinch part to our heart and we all have a hurt by the others grinch part to our heart. We are like the Jenga game with holes and we will actually tip over if we have not already.

Where do you find yourself today? Are you hanging on to your sins of the past? Are you clutching on to the hurt inflicted by others. Are you thinking in pride, I would never do that? Or is guilt pressing you down like a pancake? Are you keeping a naughty and nice list? And are you withholding love from those on your naughty list? Maybe even withholding your love from you?

Here is the truth. No matter what. Jesus meets you where you are at with your grinch heart.

Christmas came. Jesus came to rescue, heal and save. As the Grinch's heart was touched by Cindy Lou Who so also God reaches down in the person of Jesus to touch us with his divine love. God knows what we need. Deep love. Love that we

can count on. Love that won't turn its back on us. Even when we have turned our back on it. The answer to the grinch in me is to see God himself come down not from some secluded isolated mountain top but from the glory of heaven not to take your gifts, your fun, your joy, but to give you gifts, forgiveness love and joy.

**What is the cure for the Grinch in us? Jesus.** God demonstrate his love to us in this while we were still sinners Christ died for us. God loves us even when we are a grinch. Receive the gift into your heart. For when our identity is rooted in God's love we can expect that our heart will grow by three sizes or maybe more.

It is a beautiful thing when a heart is transformed!

Jesus heals all of our sin wounds. The wounds of the past are healed by the grace of God in Jesus.

With unconditional love we have new life, new hope, and we can go to difficult places, to difficult people, because we have been those difficult people and sometimes still are, and we can go to difficult places because we have been there and maybe are right now. Not with the old heart but with the new one in Christ because of Christ.

John 10:10 **I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.** You see God's love is the power of salvation but it is the power of healing. True that will only be fully realized when we are in heaven but true that we can all have a more full life now too. Because Christmas doesn't come from the store. Christmas is about Jesus which is a whole lot more.