



A Random Christmas

Andy Stanley

Note: The following content is a raw transcript and has not been edited for grammar, punctuation, or word usage.

Well, let me begin by welcoming all of our Atlanta area churches, and our strategic partners from all over the country, and now in Canada as well. And for those of you who are watching online, and those of you who are watching at North Point Television, we're all glad that you're all here. Hey, as we move into the Christmas season, one of the things that I do every year as I get close to Christmas as a pastor is I begin re-reading the Christmas story. Because as we get closer to Christmas you come to church and you expect the pastor to talk about the Christmas story, which of course us pastors, that's what we do, Christmas and Easter. You kinda know what the sermon's about before you get there. Which makes it a little hard for us, because here we go again, here we go again. So every year I start way in advance reading the Christmas story, asking God to give me fresh insight. And asking God to speak to me through this story that we know so well, that has so much to do and is so central, and there's a feeling sometimes I think we could gather at this time of year and I could just read you the story and that should be enough because it's absolutely so profound. But this year as I was reading it, I was struck by something that's true of me, I think it's true of you, and it certainly intersects with this incredible, incredible story.

01:00 S1: Isn't it amazing how we all at different stages of our life have an insatiable desire to make sense out of life? To make sense out of the details of life. That I don't want anything to be random, I want everything to make sense and I want it to all fit together in such a way that I can stand back and look at my life, if this tree can represent my life for just a minute, and everything fits. And all the points connect, and all the dots connect, and everything that happens to me I know exactly where it goes and I can say, "Wow, everything makes sense in my life." And it is in all of us, this isn't a Christian thing, or a religious thing, we just want life to make sense. We met because we're supposed to meet, and then we got engaged. Then I got that cool promotion, my kid graduated from school, we had the birth of a child. Every time somebody hands me an event, or I experience an event, I know exactly where it goes and I wanna make sure everything fits. In fact this is so much a part of human nature, not just in the United States, but all over the world, that in every culture and every language there's actually terminology that we use.

02:00 S1: That we don't think about, we don't think about it. In fact you don't wanna think about these phrases too much, because they begin to fall apart. But we use terminology to reinforce this idea that everything has a purpose, everything's going somewhere, there aren't really any random events in life. That some day we'll be able to look back on our lives and everything will have fit together. For example we say things like this, "Everything happens for a reason." You ever say that? You ever heard somebody say that? And me, and my skeptical... I don't do this, but I wanna say, "Really? Everything? Everything happens for a reason?" Again, you don't wanna start poking holes in this because it begins to fall apart, but there's something in you and there's something in me that wants to believe, "Well, even though I don't understand it now, everything happens for a reason. I don't believe in coincidence." You've said that, or somebody said, "Well, what a coincidence." "I don't believe in coincidence." "What does that mean?" "Well, I don't know, but I just don't believe in them." I think there is some sort of cosmic force, God, Karma, I don't know, but there's... I don't think there are any coincidence, I think it all fits together. You just haven't met the right person yet.

03:00 S1: What does that mean? It means someday. Well, wait, wait, wait, based on what? I don't know. Don't ask me any hard questions. Someday. It's just you haven't met the right person yet, there's just... It all goes together. I guess it wasn't meant to be. What does that mean? Well, the reason it didn't work out, it's not your fault. And it's not his fault, and it's not her fault, it just wasn't meant to be. That somewhere out there somewhere there's a meant-to-be-er and they put everything together. And so the reason it didn't work out for you... And that's another one we say, "Well, I guess that just didn't work out for you." Is it just wasn't meant to be. Because there's something in you, there's something in me, we want it all to fit together. Now, that's true of kind of the sort of negative things in life, and that's true of the fun things in life. And of course it worked out, things work out, it'll all work out. We say, "It'll all work out." Wait a minute, based on what? We don't ask many questions, it'll all work out. We just want it to all fit together. But where this really comes into play is when somebody hits a big bump in life.