

## **Disruptions** **December 24, 2021**

Earlier this week, my wife and I had a typical evening. We ate dinner, played with our daughter, put our daughter to bed, went downstairs; heard crying, went upstairs and put our daughter to bed again.

Then we came downstairs. We turned on the television. While sitting on the couch, we chose a movie from a selection of thousands of films. We pressed a few buttons on the remote control, and the entire contents of this movie, gigabytes of data, were instantly sent to our TV. And we watched *Home Alone* and ate some popcorn.

It's incredible, really, to think of the comforts and the gifts that technology affords us. If you had to go back in time 25 years and explain Netflix to someone living in the 90s, it would seem impossible. Absurd. But it's real.

Netflix is an example of a phenomenon known as a "disruption" in business language. It sounds like a negative term, disruption, but it's not. A disruption is an innovation that changes how everyday people (like you and me) live their lives. Twenty-five years ago, if you wanted to watch a movie, you got in your car and drove to Blockbuster. Then Netflix started a mail-in movie service, and then eventually allowed people to stream movies right on their own TV. Huge disruption in the market of home video watching; a huge change in how people access films.

Of course, Netflix is only possible because of another big disruption: the Internet. Remember 25 years ago, when if you wanted to communicate with someone far away, you had to pick up the phone and call them, or mail them a letter? Now, you can communicate around the world almost instantaneously. Not only that, but you can access almost all of our collective knowledge as a human species... for free. The Internet has changed our lives.

Now Netflix and the Internet are only some of the more recent disruptions. Before those two, the there was television. And before that, the telephone. And automobiles. Going back to the printing press. Ink and paper. Metalworking. The wheel. We have had these moments of technological breakthroughs. Moments of disruption. Moments that have changed our lives.

We are here tonight because of what I would consider the greatest disruption of human existence. Now granted, I'm a little biased since I'm a priest, but I think the greatest, the most significant disruption of history was the birth of Jesus Christ.

It changed how we live.

The birth of Jesus changed how we understood God. God was largely a being who was distant, who was in the heavens, who would occasionally limit Godself to interact with humans. In Jesus, the divine became human. Jesus was a manifestation of God who cried, who laughed, who skinned his knee, who went through all the struggles and joys of humanity.

Jesus' birth also changed how we understand greatness. Before this, greatness was won by respect and power, by wealth and strength, by status and noble birth. With Jesus, greatness was found in humility, in service, in love, in the way you treat your fellow human being. This is shown not only in Jesus' humble birth, but in Mary's dedication to serving God and in the lowly shepherds who are the first to learn of the Savior's birth.

The birth of Jesus would eventually even change how we view death. Before this, death was the end. After Jesus, death was merely a shift into a new life with God that continues forever.

This day/night, many years ago, when Jesus was born, the world changed. Our lives, our view of God, the way we conduct ourselves changed. Tonight we celebrate the wonderful disruption that our world needed... and that Jesus brought.

So when you get in your car to go home tonight, when you turn on the TV, when you click on your electric stove, you can think of what a gift and what a life-changer that piece of technology is. I hope you can also remember another gift: the one who was the biggest life-changer of all.

Merry Christmas. Amen.

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