

Christmas Begins With Christ

Pre Christmas Eve Service
Moorpark Country Club
Luke 2
December 23, 2010

Christmas! The very word invokes memories of family traditions, sumptuous feasting, candlelight services and childhood anticipation for Christmas morning. Why? Kids want the toys! Right? **Illustration: Guitar story.**

But why all the fuss? Are we really celebrating Jesus' birth or is Christmas just another commercial holiday where store merchants count on us to spend beyond our means? What should we remember? What is the real meaning? What is really important? **Video: Where is the Line to See Jesus?**

Everything begins and ends with Jesus Christ! Christmas isn't about food, family, friends, football, or fun! It is about our **faith!** Tonight I will tell you why Christmas apart from Christ produces an empty, commercialized, narcissistic experience. It rings hollow without Him. Ultimately, if Jesus isn't the "reason for the season", then we have:

- Santa without a Savior
- Gifts without God
- Presents without His Presence
- Sentimentality without Substance
- Commercialism without Christ
- Family gatherings not Faith gatherings
- Lights on Houses not Houses of Light!

I. What is your view of Jesus Christ?

A. Are you **fearful** of Him? (v.10-11)

10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; 11 for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

1. The shepherds were fearful and afraid.
2. Seeing angels usually meant bad news

B. Are you **praising** Him? (v.13-14)

13And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 14 "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."

1. The angels had the right idea. Praise should be a part of our celebration.
2. Shepherds joined in too. (v. 20)

The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.

C. Are you **curious** about Him? (v.15-17)

When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, "Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us." 16 So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger. 17 When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child.

1. After their initial shock the shepherds wanted to check it out! **Are you content to hear others talk about Jesus, or are you willing to check out the facts for yourself?**
2. These shepherds are good examples for us to imitate today. They received by faith the message God sent them and then responded with immediate obedience. After finding the Baby, they reported the good news to others; then they humbly returned to their duties, new men going back to the same old job.

D. Are you **treasuring** Him? (v. 19)

19But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart.

1. After the shepherds had gone, the angels had sung, it says Mary did 2 things. She treasured and pondered these things in her heart. Mary took time to ponder (to think) and treasure all that had happened.

2. What do you think she was thinking?
 - God is this really your son?
 - Is it true?
 - How can I be God's mother?
 - What will the future hold for my son?
 - Can we handle the weight of this responsibility?
 - Can I really believe all that you've told me Lord?
 - Can I trust you?
3. It took unwavering faith for her to believe that all that had happened was what God intended! In a word: Obedience! Are you treasuring all that has happened in your life?

II. How Does Christmas Begin with Christ?

- A. God loves you and wants to have a personal relationship with you!
 1. John 3:16... Jesus' came to save the world.
 2. He is the long lost Messiah for the Jewish nation and the savior of the world.
- B. Our sin separates us from God.
 1. God is holy and cannot tolerate imperfection in His presence.
 2. *Rom. 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of God's standard and 6:23 the wages of this sin is death and ultimate separation from Him in eternity.*
- C. God sent Jesus (His son) has His provision for our sin.
 1. Jesus through the incarnation was both God and man. He died on the cross to pay for the penalty of our sins.
 2. The hymn —“Hark the Herald Angels Sing” by Charles Wesley we opened the service with, says that Jesus was “born that man no more may die” and “born to raise the sons of earth.” You see Jesus was born to ultimately die, a message that the church

fathers recognized years ago and that we continue to celebrate today.

3. It is not enough to give intellectual assent to these facts. James 2:19 tells us that believing that there is a “god” isn’t good enough. Even the devil believes there is a God!

D. We must trust in Jesus Christ alone for our salvation.

1. What does that mean? We must personally put our faith in God’s provision for our sin.
2. *Eph. 2:8-9 tells us this gift is free...we can’t earn it and we certainly don’t deserve it.*
3. It is telling God. You are now the boss. I give over the “reigns” of my life to you. It is putting your life into God’s hands.

III. Conclusion...

- A. Are you fearful, worshipful (praise), curious, or pondering/treasuring?
- B. During this last song, take time to fill out the comment card. I am asking everyone to fill one out, regular attendees, and guests. Tell us what you thought. Give us your email. We have Hannah’s CD as a gift.
- C. The offering we take is going to 2 organizations: CPC, and Our Benevolence Fund
- D. **Prayer of Commitment and Song: God’s Gift (Hannah Snoots)...**
- E. Thanks for coming...
 1. Grab some coffee and cookies
 2. See you at Arroyo Vista Sundays at 10 am
 3. This week we’re having a Family Breakfast!