

Christmas Eve Service – Sunday, December 24th, 2009

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. NKJV

- In preparing for this "Christmas Eve message, I wanted to find where it was in the Bible that "Christmas Eve" was even mentioned.
- What I discovered was actually quite surprising because I found that the first time Christmas Eve is first mentioned is in Genesis.
- It's found in the account of when Adam, after God created man, turns to the woman and says; "It's Christmas - Eve!"

Luke 2:1-20 1 And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. 3 So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. 4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. 6 So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. 7 And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. 8 Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. 10 Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. 11 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger." 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: 14 "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" 15 So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us." 16 And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. 17 Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. 18 And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. 20 Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them. (NKJV)

- I have to confess that every time I teach the Christmas story I'm struck with how its enormity is wrapped in such simplicity and humility.
- When you stop and consider that first Christmas, it's really quite astonishing how the Savior of mankind actually came into this world.

- In pondering the birth of Jesus, one has to wonder why God would choose to have Him born in that way, at that time, and in that place.
- Why did Jesus come at night as a new born baby in a little obscure town then, have the birth announcement go out to lowly shepherds?
- You would think that the Savior of the world would be born in a cleaner place, a better town, and then be announced to society's elite.

- I'm keenly aware of over 300 prophecies that were fulfilled in the virgin birth in Bethlehem, and at that exact time, but why?
- I suggest to you that the answer to this is what brings; "comfort, encouragement, peace, goodwill, and good tidings of great joy, to all!"
- Allow me to attempt to answer these why questions in the following way:

1. Why was Jesus born at night?

- Because the world was in darkness. Jesus was born into a very dark and desperate time spiritually as the light of the world.
- It's in the dark silence of the night not the bright busyness of the day that we need Him most. It's in those desperate times in our lives.
- Not only do we need Him most but we notice Him most. The darker the dark is, the brighter the light will be.
- This is how it was for those shepherds that night. The light of God's glory brightly shined on them and the text says; it freaked them out.

2. Why was Jesus born all alone?

- Because He came for the lonely, brokenhearted, helpless and hopeless people. Joseph and Mary were all alone and far from home.
- Luke's account seems to indicate that when Mary gives birth to Jesus, she alone wraps him in cloth and places him in the manger.
- This should bring us great comfort and joy, because Jesus is there with us during those times when we feel like we're all alone.
- I've experienced how and am convinced that; "God helps those who cannot help themselves." God helps the helpless and the hopeless.

3. Why was Jesus born in squalor?

- Because if He had been born in pomp and plenty, it wouldn't have been "good tidings of great joy which would be to 'all' people."
- If the announcement had gone to society's elite, and not to lowly shepherds then good tidings of great joy would be for "those" people.
- In other words, if this will bring great joy to shepherds then it will bring great joy to "all" people," from "all" walks of life, even nobody's.
- This should bring us great encouragement. It demonstrates how that God is attracted to humble people. Why? Because God is humble.

4. Why was Jesus born to die?

- Because "all" have sinned, and the wages of our sin is death, and the world needed a savior Who would pay for their sin with His death.
- This is why Jesus was born. He was born to die, so that we can be born again to live. His birth points to His death for our eternal life.
- This answers the question of why Jesus was born as a child into the world; so we could come as a child to Him the Savior of the world.

Mark 10:15 I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." NIV

- The way Jesus entered this world would be similar to how Jesus would leave this world. His death is woven into the fabric of his birth.
- Jesus' body was wrapped in cloth and then He lay in a stone manger at His birth!
- Jesus' body was wrapped in cloth and then He lay in a stone tomb at His death!

- Jesus came into this life through a virgin's womb, and in His death left this life in an empty tomb.
- Jesus was born in this way, for us here today, as if to say; "I love you, and I want to save you, so you won't perish but have eternal life!"

How The Grinch Stole Christmas - The Rest of the Story

What has this to do with Christmas you ask?
For this I must take our story to task.
You see the story as told is missing a part –
the reason for Grinch's too small heart.

You see, the Grinch was once like all Whoville's Whos.
Until he was faced with a chance to choose.
Would he accept Jesus in his heart,
Or would he reject Him ask Him to part?

Someone once told him he was a sinner,
But he refused to accept it, and thought he was a winner.
"Jesus is for the weak and I am too strong!"
But Grinch was mistaken, he was dead wrong.

His heart got smaller, and he was harder to reach.
He had all the answers and was impossible to teach.
He moved to a cave where he could sit and be mean
And yelled at his dog until he finally turned green.

But then one day, in the midst of being bad,
He remembered the words of Cindy Lou and was sad.
"Jesus loves you, and died for your sin,
All you have to do is invite Him in."

He stopped in his tracks and dropped down to his knees
And said, "Jesus forgive me, and save me please."
All at once his heart, it grew!
And he was different at last – this he knew!

He went back to Whoville where he shared with them love.
And told them how Jesus came down from above.
Many in Whoville at the sight of this story,
Believed in Jesus and gave God the glory.

Maybe this Christmas you'll learn from the Grinch,
That believing in Jesus is really a cinch.
Simply believe that He died for your sins and invite
Jesus to be your Savior tonight.

And when you surrender to Jesus, it's true,
Your heart will grow two sizes larger too.
It won't REALLY grow any larger than now.
But it will hold more love, oh boy and how!

Now think not that this story is for children lest,
You forget it's adults who resemble Grinch the best.
Jesus died for the young and the older too.
Most importantly, He died for me and for you.

So I end this story with a question I ask,
And in this I must take you to task.
Will you ask Jesus to enter your heart,
Or will you reject Him and ask Him to part?