

Why Christ's Birth is Good News – Luke 2:1-20 - Saturday, December 24th, 2016

- I'd like to begin by sharing with you how that every year during Thanksgiving and Christmas, I'm reminded of how grateful I am.
- I'm so very grateful and thankful for you as a church body, and I deem it a privilege to be the pastor of such a wonderful church.
- For those of you who may be new to this church, or just visiting this church, we want to welcome you, and say Merry Christmas.

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

Luke 2:1-20 KJV And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (2) (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) (3) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. (4) And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) (5) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. (6) And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. (7) And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. (8) And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. (9) And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. (10) And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. (11) For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. (12) And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, 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, good will toward men. (15) And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. (16) And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. (17) And when they had seen *it*, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. (18) And all they that heard *it* wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. (19) But Mary kept all these things, and pondered *them* in her heart. (20) And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

- After really seeking the Lord, He clearly impressed upon my heart what it is that He would have me to talk about this Christmas.
- Namely, that of why the Savior's birth brings good tidings of great joy to all men, and on earth peace, good will toward all men.
- I think you'd agree with me that the world today is the antithesis of good tidings and great joy, let alone peace and good will.

- Please know that I in no way wish to be dismissive of those for whom this Christmas has been and is a very happy Christmas.
- While I realize that for some, Christmas is one of the happiest times of the year, I also realize that for most, it's the opposite.
- This because, Christmas is a painful time for those who are in the midst of a trial and as such a season of suffering and sorrow.

- I think of those serving our country in the military that are deployed and away from their family and friends during the holidays.
- Then there are those who are on the sick bed of suffering after having been on the receiving end of a devastating diagnosis.
- Truth be known, absent a miracle from almighty God, this may very well be the last Christmas some have with their loved ones.

- I think of the grieving hearts of those who are estranged from family, whether it's a wayward child or worse yet husband or wife.
- One of the hardest things to deal with during Christmas and New Years is the death of a husband, wife, mother, father, or child.
- For some, this Christmas is your first Christmas without them, and you understandably just want to survive it and get through it.

- It's during the holidays that a well intentioned Merry Christmas or Happy New Year become stinging reminders of anything but.
- Often times our response to the Holiday well wishing is that of a strained smile, or chuckle that's a chore to hide what's inside.
- If they only knew what I was going through! They have no idea how bitter the cup of suffering is that I taste of, and drink from.

- Perhaps I just described what you feel like this Christmas, well, others may not know what you're going through, but God does.
- Enter the birth of the Savior on that holy night, when God became a man, Immanuel, with us, one of us, gifting salvation to us.
- As one has so aptly said, God's greatest deed was for mans greatest need, and God becoming one of us was the way He did it.

There's a story that's told that I think is a great illustration and example of why God did what God did. It was Christmas Eve and the family was preparing to attend the special service of their local church. Everyone was going except Dad, who was an honest man, a man who could not seem to wrap his logical mind around the story of God come to earth as a baby in a manger. He didn't want to be a hypocrite, pretending to worship a Savior he wasn't sure even existed, so he stayed home, built a fire to dispel the bitter cold of that winter night and began to read the paper, waiting for his family's return. Hearing a knock at the window, he turned to see a tiny bird trying to reach the warmth of the fire. The man opened the window but the bird refused to come in. Grabbing his coat, the man went out to the barn and opened the barn doors wide – but still, the bird refused to come in. The man thought, "If only I could be a bird, for just one minute, I could lead the bird to safety." At that moment, he heard the church bells ring and finally understood why Jesus came to earth as a man - to become one of us so He could lead us to eternal safety.

- I'm hoping that you'll kindly indulge me for the remainder of our time as I answer the "why" question concerning Christ's birth.
- Specifically, the question of why Christ's birth brings good tidings of great joy to all men and peace and good will to all men.
- I'm keenly aware that this may be an oversimplification, but Christ's birth is the answer to whatever you are going through now.

- Jesus is "THE" answer to fear, worry, hopelessness, loneliness, depression, despair, sickness, disease and everything else.
- Simply put, the birth of the Savior is good news because He was born to die so we could be born again to live for all eternity.
- It's for this reason that during this season, we celebrate the Savior's birth, and in so doing, we also celebrate the Savior's death.

- Were it not for His death and resurrection, His work here, to bring peace and good will toward men would've been incomplete.
- The first time He came it was through a virgin's womb, and in death He left through an empty tomb, and finally defeated death.
- The way He entered this world would be similar to how He left this world in that His death is woven into the fabric of his birth.

- His body was wrapped in cloth in a stone manger at His birth, and His body was wrapped in cloth in a stone tomb at His death!
- As one aptly quipped, Jesus entered our world through a door marked No Entrance, and left it through a door marked No Exit.
- The question for all mankind becomes will we allow Him entrance into the door of our life for eternal life, when we exit this life?

- In closing, let me say, if you've never called upon the name of the Lord Jesus to be saved, I would implore you to do so today.
- I'll explain how, by sharing with you what one has called the ABC's of Salvation. The A is for Admit. Admit that you're a sinner.
- The B is for Believe. Believe in your heart that Jesus is Lord. The C is for Call. Call upon the name of the Lord; you'll be saved.