

The Hope of Christmas – Luke 2:1-20 - Sunday, December 24th, 2017

- I've chosen as a title for my Christmas sermon, "The Hope of Christmas."
- As I prayed and sought the Lord concerning what I should talk about this year He made it very clear it needed to be about hope.
- Specifically, the hope that Christmas can bring to those who are struggling and hurting, especially during the Christmas season.

- Simply put, Christmas can be a time of renewed hope for the hopeless who always find themselves dreading this time of year.
- I won't depress you with the statistics surrounding Christmas; rather, I'm praying that I'll bless you with the hope of Christmas.
- To do that, I want for us to revisit the account in the Gospel of Luke chapter two, and I'll read from verse one to verse twenty.

Luke 2:1–20 (NKJV) — 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.

- In our time together today, I hope to draw your attention to some of the details that are woven into the fabric of this passage.
- In so doing, I'm trusting the Holy Spirit will connect the dots, as it were, to all of our lives, related to where we're at in our lives.
- What follows are three details that speak to the hope of Christmas for all people, but especially the downcast and the outcast.

1. Jesus was born at night in obscurity

- While I realize that this detail may seem somewhat inconsequential, there are specific reasons that Jesus was born at night.
- I would suggest that one of the main reasons is because Jesus is the light of the world, which was and is in darkness spiritually.
- The truth of the matter is it's in the dark silence of the night not the bright busyness of the day that the light is needed the most.

- It's in those dark nights of the soul, when we walk through that valley of the shadow of death, that His light is there with me.
- As one so aptly noted, in order for there to be a shadow in that dark valley of death and night of the soul, there has to be light.
- It was that same light of God's glory that shined so brightly around the shepherds, as the angel of the Lord stood before them.

- I think it's incumbent upon us to ask ourselves the question of why the announcement of the Savior's birth is first to shepherds.
- Let me hasten to say that being a shepherd in that society was considered to be the least, last, and lowliest of all professions.
- So much so that they were looked down upon and even despised by society's elite, and as such were the nobody's of society.

- Had the announcement gone to society's elite, and not to shepherds then good tidings of great joy would be for "those" people.
- In other words, if it brings great joy to shepherds then it will bring great joy to all people, from "all" walks of life, even nobody's.
- If the Savior had been born in pomp and plenty, it wouldn't have been "good tidings of great joy which would be to 'all' people."

2. Jesus was born in filth and poverty

- This one detail is amongst the most fascinating, and this for a number of reasons, chiefly because of what it means for all of us.
- Allow me to explain why by first pointing out the detail in verse 12 where we're told that Jesus was wrapped in swaddling cloths.
- It's important to understand that these were strips and scraps of cloth that were used because Joseph and Mary were so poor.

- It's important to understand that the Savior of the world was placed in an animals feeding trough which is what a manger was.
- I'm keenly aware that it may be uncomfortable for us to talk about this, but Joseph and Mary were actually in complete poverty.
- But God as only He can provides for them financially, sending the Magi with expensive gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh.

3. Jesus was born to the downcast and outcast

- Notice this most interesting detail in verse nineteen about how Mary had kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.
- The reason I mention this is because it's believed that Mary was only about 15-16 years of age when she gave birth to Jesus.
- I cannot even begin to imagine what this must have been like for her to be pregnant without being married in that day and age.

- It's for this reason that both Joseph and Mary would have been society's outcasts leaving them both helpless and all alone.
- One of the things that has always intrigued me in the Gospel's is how that Jesus was attracted to the helpless and hopeless.
- This because, God helps those who cannot help themselves, such that God helps the helpless and gives hope to the hopeless.

- This last week as I was preparing for this Christmas sermon, I happened upon a 19-minute video that I want to share with you.
- The reason being is that it captures the intensity and the reality of what the Savior's birth was like on that silent and holy night.
- For those interested in knowing more about this video I would encourage you to visit this website, www.vidangel.com/thechosen.

- 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.

The ABC's of Salvation - A is for Admit you're a sinner – Romans 3:23 says that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. The B is for Believe. Romans 10:9-10 says if you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, you will be saved. The C is for Call. Romans 10:9-10 also says if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. Romans 10:13 says that all who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.